

# External Threats Mask Internal Fears: Edwardian Invasion Literature 1899-1914

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### **Contents**

Acknowledgements	3
Illustrations	4
Introduction	5
 Chapter 1	 Invasion and the Edwardian Age
1.1	Introduction 16
1.2	Crisis or Golden Age? Trends in Edwardian Historiography 17
1.3	British Invasion and Future-War Literature 1871-1914 31
1.4	Approach and Methodology 54
1.5	Conclusion 77
 Chapter 2	 Limitless Britishness: The Nature of National Identity in Edwardian Invasion Literature
2.1	Introduction 79
2.2	Imagined Britishness 80
2.3	The State of the Nation 84
2.4	The Threats to the Nation 112
2.5	Conclusion: The Breadth of Britishness 137
 Chapter 3	 Dreams of 'A Nations in Arms': Representations of Compulsory Military Service in Edwardian Invasion Literature
3.1	Introduction 139
3.2	Case Study: A J Dawson's The Message (1907) 140
3.3	The Case for Conscription 147
3.4	The Need for Conscription: Britain's Social Perils 153
3.5	Visions of Military Reform 179
3.6	Conclusion: A Multi-Faceted Campaign 200

Chapter 4	The Edwardian Crisis and Contemporary Invasion Narratives	
4.1	Introduction	202
4.2	Perfidious Liberals	203
4.3	The Persistent Sisterhood	217
4.4	The Irish Question	229
4.5	The Red Hand of Ruin	249
4.6	Conclusion: An Edwardian Crisis?	268
Conclusion		270
Bibliography		276

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## **Illustrations**

<i>Figure 2.1</i> - H. M. Brock, '...That Queen of Ancient Britons...' (A. J. Dawson, <i>The Message</i> )	95
<i>Figure 2.2</i> - T. S. Crowther, 'Count Von Beilstein Was a Spy!' (W. Le Queux, <i>The Great War in England in 1897</i> )	118
<i>Figure 3.1</i> - H. M. Brock, 'The Roaring City' (A. J. Dawson, <i>The Message</i> )	160
<i>Figure 3.2</i> – 'The Invasion of 1910' ( <i>The Times</i> , 13 <sup>th</sup> March 1906)	188
<i>Figure 4.1</i> - H. L. Shindler, '...three guns were in position' (A. C. Fox-Davies, <i>The Sex Triumphant</i> )	227
<i>Figure 4.2</i> - T. S. Crowther, 'Irish Volunteers Halting in King's Cliffe' (W. Le Queux, <i>The Great War in England in 1897</i> )	237
<i>Figure 4.3</i> – Book cover, unknown illustrator (J. D. Mayne, <i>The Triumph of Socialism</i> )	256

## **Abstract**

Invasion literature is a branch of fiction that enjoyed significant popularity in Britain prior to the First World War. Focusing on invasion narratives of the Edwardian period, this thesis foregrounds the literature's representation of domestic political issues. These include debates over national identity, the campaign for compulsory military service, and the socio-political upheavals of the late-Edwardian period. Through emphasising the importance of these internal themes, the thesis argues that such narratives were vehicles for multifaceted critiques of British society rather than one-dimensional predictions of invasion. Exploring the ideological origins of these narratives, the thesis questions the dominant understanding that invasion literature was a Tory product. The genre is instead interpreted as a product of the British 'Radical Right'. Presenting invasion literature as a repository of varied contemporary anxieties, the thesis reconsiders the analytical value of the 'Edwardian Crisis', arguing that narratives of invasion illustrate a pronounced sense of approaching crisis. This thesis therefore offers an original contribution to modern British political and cultural history, and invasion literature studies.

## **Introduction**

The history of the British Isles has been heavily shaped by the fear of invasion. From the Romans to the Spanish Armada, and from Napoleon to Hitler, many of the key moments of Britain's island story have revolved around invasions, both those that succeeded and those that were repelled. Successive generations have experienced anxieties, both rational and irrational, over the prospect of foreign troops landing on British beaches.<sup>1</sup> In the modern period Britain's relationship with the sea saw such fears grow exponentially. As an imperial power whose welfare increasingly depended on maintaining control of global shipping lanes, the threat of a foreign attack on the metropole began to exert a major influence on Britain's foreign and defence policy.<sup>2</sup> Such fears became particularly acute during the late-Victorian and Edwardian years. A series of high-profile invasion scares gripped Britain in the years approaching 1914, ranging from the anti-French channel tunnel panic of 1881 through to the height of the Anglo-German naval race in 1909. Despite a consistent chorus of scepticism from some politicians and strategic planners, the threat of invasion remained a key facet of

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed account see Norman Longmate's two volume study of the invasion history of Britain, *Defending the Island: from Caesar to the Armada* (London: Grafton Books, 1990), p. 9, and *Island Fortress: The Defence of Great Britain 1603-1945* (London: Hutchinson, 1991).

<sup>2</sup> For a work that focuses on the early modern and modern period see F. J. McLynn, *Invasion: from the Armada to Hitler, 1588-1945* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987).

Britain's political climate throughout the pre-war period.<sup>3</sup> For the historian Howard Moon, it was "nothing less than a national obsession".<sup>4</sup>

Moon's bold assertion raises important questions concerning the popular currency of invasion anxieties. In his study of Britain's evolving defence policy *The Prospect of War*, John Gooch identified invasion as a fear that predominantly concerned an upper-middle class political elite.<sup>5</sup> Yet there is a range of evidence that suggests invasion was a far more universal fear, one that cut across boundaries of class and national identity. The late-Edwardian airship panic, recently reassessed by Brett Holman, is one such example. Between 1912 and 1913 people all over Britain and Ireland reported seeing mysterious aircraft in the night sky, sightings which were presumed to represent a worrying expansion of German aerial power. Despite having little basis in reality, the sense of unchecked German activity in British airspace exerted an extraordinary hold on the national consciousness.<sup>6</sup> The great success of Guy du Maurier's invasion-scare play *An Englishman's Home* (1909) – watched by nearly 200,000 people in London alone – similarly suggests that the threat of invasion enjoyed significant popular purchase, both as a socio-political anxiety and as a form of entertainment.<sup>7</sup> When war broke out in August 1914, moreover, many Britons assumed that invasion was imminent. Entrenchment was even begun in the vulnerable county of Essex, where detailed plans were also made for civilian evacuation.<sup>8</sup>

The fear of foreign attack also had an important influence on Britain's cultural climate, particularly on Edwardian literature. The apocalyptic prospect of invasion naturally spoke to

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<sup>3</sup> During his time as President of the Board of Trade, Winston Churchill described the German invasion scare as "a false, lying panic started in the party interests of the Conservatives". See F. W. Hirst, *The Six Panics and Other Essays* (London: Methuen, 1913), p. 91.

<sup>4</sup> H. Moon, 'The Invasion of the United Kingdom: Public Controversy and Official Planning', unpublished PhD thesis (University of London, 1968), p. 652.

<sup>5</sup> J. Gooch, *The Prospect of War: Studies in British Defence Policy, 1847-1942* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1981), p. 36.

<sup>6</sup> B. Holman, *The Next War in the Air: Britain's Fear of the Bomber, 1908-1941* (Ashgate: Farnham, 2014), pp. 187-202.

<sup>7</sup> For these figures see 'Notes – Mainly Personal', *Evening Telegraph* (21<sup>st</sup> June 1909), p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> C. Pennell, "The Germans Have Landed!': Invasion Fears in the South-East of England. August to December 1914', in H. Jones, J. O'Brien and C. Schmidt-Supprian, eds, *Untold War: New Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 106-112.

literary Modernism, a movement with the themes of change and transformation at its heart. Various canonical ‘greats’ of the period, in turn, were directly shaped by fears of military, political, and cultural invasion. While Rudyard Kipling’s account of ‘the Great Game’ in *Kim* (1901) involved the improbable threat of Russian infantry pouring over the Hindu Kush, Joseph Conrad’s *The Secret Agent* (1907) and G. K. Chesterton’s *The Man who was Thursday* (1908) imagined London invaded not by armies but by foreign political radicalism. In *Howards End* (1910), seen by Richard Scully as “the most important literary representation of Germany of the period”, E. M. Forster describes an invasion of German ideas rather than soldiers, specifically “of hyper-nationalism and ‘national efficiency’”.<sup>9</sup> This was also the defining era of espionage fiction, with authors such as William Le Queux, E. P. Oppenheim, and later John Buchan popularising the idea of the enemy spy and bemoaning the state of British intelligence. The literary climate of the late-Victorian and Edwardian period, therefore, was significantly shaped by the abstract fear of invasion.<sup>10</sup>

The clearest manifestation of this influence was the phenomenon of invasion literature, a genre which forms the main focus of this thesis. Described by Samuel Hynes as “an odd sub-category of popular literature”, the genre responded directly to the threat of foreign attack by imagining French, Russian, and German invasions of Britain, often in lurid, highly sensationalist detail.<sup>11</sup> Though forming part of a global literary discourse of invasion and future-war, ranging from anti-German *revanche* novels popular in pre-war France through to American ‘Yellow Peril’ narratives, such literature enjoyed particular success in Britain.<sup>12</sup> Beginning in earnest with G. T. Chesney’s short story *The Battle of Dorking* (1871), hundreds of narratives were published in the decades before 1914 envisaging a wide

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<sup>9</sup> R. Scully, *British Images of Germany: Admiration, Antagonism and Ambivalence* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), p. 120.

<sup>10</sup> See D. Trotter, *The English Novel in History 1895-1920* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), especially pp. 167-180.

<sup>11</sup> S. Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 34.

<sup>12</sup> For American ‘Yellow Peril’ anxieties see E. L. Wong, ‘In a Future Tense: Immigration Law, Counterfactual Histories, and Chinese Invasion Fiction’, *American Literary History*, 26.3 (2014), pp. 511-535. For “the great business of *la revanche*”, particularly the prolific output of Capitaine Émile Driant, see I. F. Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War: Future Wars 1763-3749*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 101-105.



variety of invasion plots, from opportunistic raids to long-term military occupations. The genre reached its peak during the Edwardian period, reflecting the impact of near-universal literacy and an ever-expanding mass media. This period also saw the rise of Germany as the predominant invasion threat, both in reality and in fiction. Popular examples included *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903) by Erskine Childers, widely celebrated as a groundbreaking work of espionage fiction, and *The Invasion of 1910* (1906) by William Le Queux, a novel which described a successful invasion of Britain by a German army of 250,000 troops. Both examples went through numerous editions, with the latter selling over a million copies.<sup>13</sup>

Historians and literary critics alike have regularly emphasised the cultural and political significance of invasion literature. Such narratives have traditionally been approached, in C. D. Eby's words, as "historical records...valuable for registering public responses to the gyrations of British foreign policy during that volatile period".<sup>14</sup> Though alarmist and manipulative in style, Catriona Pennell has argued there is no doubt that such fiction genuinely "expressed the fears of many Edwardians":

The growth of German imperialism, the international disputes with France and later with Germany, and the decision to abandon the traditional policy of isolation were all factors that encouraged an expectation of war in Britain.<sup>15</sup>

In the autobiographical *Before the Lamps Went Out*, the historian Esme Wingfield-Stratford identified Le Queux's fiction as one of the "strange ways" by which "the consciousness of the German peril...was generated in the public mind".<sup>16</sup> An illustrative example of this process can be found in the memoirs of Sam Sutcliffe, a working class youth from north London. Recalling the serialisation of 'When England Slept' in *Pearson's Weekly*, Sutcliffe suggests that his contemporaries read invasion fiction "with excitement and, perhaps, concealed fear".

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<sup>13</sup> Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War*, p. 122.

<sup>14</sup> C. D. Eby, *The Road to Armageddon: The Martial Spirit in English Popular Literature* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1907), p. 12.

<sup>15</sup> Pennell, "The Germans Have Landed!': Invasion Fears in the South-East of England. August to December 1914', in Jones, O'Brien and Schmidt-Suppran, eds, *Untold War*, pp. 98-99.

<sup>16</sup> E. Wingfield-Stratford, *Before the Lamps Went Out* (London: Hodder & Stroughton, 1945), p. 210.

Ordinary people generally accepted, so Sutcliffe asserts, “that war with Germany was inevitable”.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, it has even been argued that the popularity of invasion literature actively contributed to, rather than simply reflected, the gradual decline in Anglo-German relations.<sup>18</sup>

Assessing the cultural and political influence of invasion literature, however, is not without its challenges. The issue of popular reception, in particular, is a notoriously difficult nut to crack. It has been widely assumed that British invasion literature increased the likelihood of war between Britain and Germany. In *Britain and the Origins of the First World War*, Zara Steiner and Keith Neilson argue that the same pressure “which led men to read invasion stories in the press and to welcome the fictional accounts of war to come” prepared the way for war in 1914.<sup>19</sup> Yet while such assertions may seem self-evident, A. Michael Matin has argued that they are “impossible to verify objectively”.<sup>20</sup> Such assumptions are the product of what Jonathan Rose terms the “common fallacies of reader response”, firstly, that “all literature is political, in the sense that it always influences the political consciousness of the reader”, and secondly, that “the influence of a given text is directly proportional to its circulation”.<sup>21</sup> While Edwardian invasion literature did achieve a large circulation during a period of increasing Germanophobia, it cannot be assumed that these two factors were connected. Though we know that invasion narratives were widely read, and we have accounts from numerous individual readers, we know less about how (if at all) such fiction influenced its readership in general.

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<sup>17</sup> S. Sutcliffe, *Nobody of Any Importance: A Foot Soldier's Memoir of World War I* (Kindle ed.: Sutcliffe Publishing, 2014).

<sup>18</sup> I. F. Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War: Future Wars 1763-3749*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 121.

<sup>19</sup> Z. S. Steiner and K. Neilson, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003) p. 276.

<sup>20</sup> A. Michael Matin, “The Benefit and the Handicap of Hindsight’: Modelling Risk and Reassessing Future-War Fiction after the 9/11-Induced Shift to a US National Security Strategy of Pre-Emptive Attack’, in Seed, *Future Wars*, p. 222.

<sup>21</sup> J. Rose, ‘Rereading the English Common Reader: A Preface to a History of Audiences’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 53.1 (1992), p. 48.

The authors of invasion literature, as with their audience, present significant analytical challenges. Part of this challenge concerns the long shadow of postmodernism. At the height of the linguistic turn, as Roland Barthes announced 'The Death of the Author', authorial intentions and biographical context were dismissed as critical limitations on the cogent analysis of texts.<sup>22</sup> Yet in recent years the concept of authorial intent has, to some degree, reasserted itself. Recognising its theoretical drawbacks, scholars such as Ryan Clark have argued that if "a critic can add to a text by appealing to evidence of the author's intention...a critic should make use of this evidence".<sup>23</sup> Even with this justification in mind, the process of assessing what motivated individual authors to write invasion narratives is far from straightforward. Such authors conceivably responded to a huge range of influences, including xenophobia, calls for increased military or naval spending, and monetary opportunism. Indeed, some authors arguably saw invasion as a remote prospect, but chose nonetheless to harness what was a popular literary form. The abstract fear of foreign attack, then, should not be assumed as the driving force behind the production of such literature.

One area that deserves greater research is the influence of domestic politics on the authors of pre-1914 British invasion narratives. Previous research concerning this literature has tended to focus on what might be called its 'external' significance. Various analyses have explored the genre's relationship with the development of military strategy and technology in the late-Victorian and Edwardian period, its representation of shifting alliances and power-politics in contemporary Europe, specifically declining relations between Britain and Germany, and the impact (or lack thereof) the literature had on the outbreak of war in 1914. The Edwardian era, however, was not just a period of technological advance and upheaval in European diplomacy. It was equally marked by a series of major domestic political challenges, from social reform and industrial unrest through to the female suffrage campaign and the resurgent Irish Home Rule movement. Though forming the subject of

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<sup>22</sup> R. Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', *Image, Music, Text* (London: Fontana Press, 1977), pp. 142-148.

<sup>23</sup> R. K. Clark, 'Reading for Intent: Why Authors Matter in Criticism', unpublished PhD thesis (University of Memphis, 2007), p. 20.

some excellent research, invasion literature has never been appropriately contextualised in this domestic political history of pre-1914 Britain. The primary goal of this thesis is to achieve this contextualisation, analysing how the domestic political upheavals of the Edwardian period influenced the production and reception of invasion literature. Yet importantly, this process is reciprocal. In exploring this dynamic, the project will equally illustrate how invasion literature influenced the Edwardian socio-political climate, and what such narratives suggest about the nature of domestic upheaval in contemporary Britain.

This thesis will analyse a cross-section of literature published (with a few exceptions) between 1899 and 1914. Encompassing a wide range of texts, varying in length, format, and literary style, all of the examples consulted are heavily influenced by themes of invasion, and as such, are defined by this project as 'invasion narratives'. The chosen time-frame limits the analysis to invasion literature published in the sixteen years prior to the outbreak of the First World War, in an effort to reflect the domestic political anxieties of the Edwardian period. This contrasts with most previous studies of British invasion literature, which generally take 1871 as their starting point (the year in which *The Battle of Dorking* was first published). Through close textual analysis of these narratives, the thesis will draw out several key issues of domestic political importance, and analyse how these issues are represented in the literature under consideration. This textual analysis will be combined (where possible) with detailed biographical portraits of authors, through biographies and autobiographies, literary reference collections, and a selection of other archival material. The critical reception of these texts will also be assessed, as the thesis refers to a large number of book reviews from contemporary journals, periodicals, and newspapers. By approaching Edwardian invasion narratives in this manner, the project foregrounds the idea of authorial motivation. While acknowledging the problematic nature of this concept, the thesis argues that informed conclusions can be drawn on the way in which domestic political anxieties influenced the authors of British invasion literature.

This thesis is divided into four non-chronological chapters, which are themselves split into thematic subsections. The opening chapter, 'Invasion and the Edwardian Age', outlines the goals and arguments of the project in greater detail. Aiming to begin the process of locating British invasion literature in its domestic political context, the chapter opens with a review of trends in Edwardian historiography. This involves identifying the competing 'crisis' and 'golden age' narratives, and exploring the transitional social and political forces that shaped the Edwardian period. The focus of the chapter then turns to a second historiography, of late-Victorian and Edwardian invasion literature. Analysing the research of numerous key historians and literary critics, notably I. F. Clarke's groundbreaking study *Voices Prophesying War: Future Wars 1763-3749*, several important historiographical trends are identified. This includes assessing the 'forecasting' nature of invasion literature, the genre's relationship with the 'literary' fiction of the period, and the changing literary function of Germany in the run up to 1914. The chapter finishes by fusing these historiographies together, explaining how the thesis aims to contextualise invasion literature in the domestic political history of Edwardian Britain. Outlining the project's analytical approach, and highlighting the accompanying methodological challenges, this section introduces the three major goals of the thesis. These are, in brief: a shift in analytical focus from 'external' to 'internal' themes; a reassessment of the ideological origins of invasion literature; and a defence of the subjective value of the 'Edwardian Crisis'.

The second chapter of the thesis, 'Limitless Britishness: The Nature of National Identity in Edwardian Invasion Literature', assesses the important position of identity in Edwardian invasion narratives. The chapter argues that invasion literature typically created and promoted an implicit sense of national identity, crystallising an understanding of and a rigid commitment to Britishness. Using Benedict Anderson's theory of 'imagined communities', the chapter approaches the 'national identity' of invasion literature as a flexible concept, producing innumerable 'Britains' rather than a uniform understanding of Britishness. This understanding of identity, moreover, was often inclusive rather than exclusive. Through

various common themes, such as appeals to Anglo-American unity and a paternalistic treatment of class relations, these narratives regularly promote an assimilative understanding of British identity. Yet invasion literature was equally characterised by a pervasive fear of national decline and division. The second half of the chapter explores these fears in detail, stressing the varied nature of the Edwardian invasion-scare. Aside from the spectre of military invasion, other related anxieties include the threat of German economic infiltration, concerns over unchecked immigration, and anger at the spread of 'foreign' political radicalism. Such 'alien' forces are presented as having a detrimental effect on British national identity. The clearest definitions of Britishness in Edwardian invasion literature, the chapter concludes, are oppositional in nature. While such texts do not offer a straightforward vision of contemporary Britishness, they promote a clear idea of what Britain was not.

The third chapter, 'Dreams of 'A Nation in Arms': Representations of Compulsory Military Service in Edwardian Invasion Literature', emphasises the significant influence of the compulsory military service campaign on contemporary invasion narratives. Offering a direct military solution to the threat of invasion, such works equally stress the social and political benefits of compulsory service. This dynamic is highlighted in an opening case study, in which *The Message* (first published in 1907) by A. J. Dawson is analysed at length. The example is then grounded in the historiography of the campaign for compulsory military service. Arguing that Edwardian invasion literature was written almost exclusively by supporters of this campaign, the chapter analyses a range of pro-compulsion themes, such as anxieties over the physical health of the British populace, and opposition to the national 'obsession' with sport and leisure. These fears are presented as consistent with the ideas of the Edwardian 'Radical Right' rather than the ideology of traditional Toryism, with which invasion literature has often been associated. Having highlighted the nature of these 'problems', the chapter then explores the compulsory service-led 'solutions' imagined by several key examples, including *The Invasion of 1910* by William Le Queux and *When*

*William Came* by Saki (H. H. Munro). These visions of military reform are marked by contrasts and contradictions. This is a product, the chapter argues, of an authorial inability to rationalise the goals of compulsory service with the traditional principles of British military volunteerism.

The final chapter of the thesis, 'The Edwardian Crisis and Contemporary Invasion Narratives', analyses the genre's representation of four major domestic political flashpoints. The first of these flashpoints concerns the treatment of the Liberal Party in invasion literature, and highlights the 1906 Liberal election victory as an important watershed in the representation of Liberalism. Exploring various examples of negative sentiment towards the Liberals, including crude portrayals of 'Pro-Boer' politicians, Edwardian invasion literature is presented as generally anti-Liberal in quality. The chapter then moves on to consider the three 'rebellions' identified by George Dangerfield in *The Strange Death of Liberal England*: the 'Women's Rebellion'; the Irish Crisis or 'Tory Rebellion'; and the 'Workers' Rebellion'. As with the genre's anti-Liberalism, the chapter argues that invasion literature was shaped by a near-universal opposition to female suffrage. This opposition, however, was multi-layered, ranging from base disapproval of the violent tactics of the Women's Social and Political Union through to fears that a crisis was developing in British gender relations. The genre's representation of Irish Home Rule, in turn, was closely influenced by the controversy surrounding the Parliament Act. Post-1911 invasion narratives, unlike earlier works, were shaped by uncompromising opposition to the Home Rule campaign. Finally, the chapter explores how the industrial unrest of Edwardian Britain is represented in invasion literature. Highlighting the common authorial distinction between 'decent' workers and a degenerate revolutionary underclass, it is emphasised that visions of class conflict are a characteristic feature of Edwardian invasion narratives. The chapter concludes by arguing that many authors of invasion literature believed Britain to be in an advanced state of political crisis.

In the famous socio-political analysis *The Condition of England* (1909), the Liberal MP Charles Masterman highlighted the dangers of assessing an age through its cultural output, and specifically its canonical fiction:

Select ten, say, of the greatest writers of the Victorian era, and attempt from the picture which they present to effect a reconstruction of the Victorian age. The product is a human society so remote from all benignant ways as to demand nothing less than the advent of a kindly comet which will sweep the whole affair into nothingness.<sup>24</sup>

Just as Victorian Britain was not all Dickensian misery, Edwardian Britain was not permanently gripped by pervasive invasion anxieties. This thesis, therefore, does not pretend to offer a comprehensive history of the Edwardian period. Yet neither should the project be understood as a work of literary criticism. In proposing a new approach to analysing invasion literature, this thesis aims to reconsider the nature and function of the Edwardian fear of invasion. Rather than a straightforward indication of widespread invasion concerns, such fears were shaped by an acute sense of domestic political upheaval. Though perhaps representing inaccurate assessments of the political climate, invasion narratives offer invaluable insight on the anxieties of contemporary authors. They highlight, moreover, the contemporary value of the 'Edwardian Crisis', suggesting the concept is more than a historiographical construct. The Edwardian invasion scare, as such, was about far more than the fear of invasion.

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<sup>24</sup> C. F. G. Masterman, *The Condition of England* (London: Shenval Press, 1960), p. 5.



## **Invasion and the Edwardian age**

### **1.1 - Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to forge a link between two distinct historiographies, before establishing where this project fits between the two. It begins with a detailed survey of Edwardian studies, drawing particular attention to the competing 'crisis' and 'golden age' historiographical narratives. This survey also addresses a range of supporting historiographical debates, such as over the value of 'Edwardian' as a historical label, and the retrospective influence of the First World War on received understandings of the Edwardian period. Finally, this survey will conduct a basic exploration of the socio-political events and controversies that are often referred to as the 'Edwardian Crisis'. The second part of the chapter engages in a similar historiographical analysis of British invasion literature. It explores the origins of this fiction, its rise to prominence during the late-Victorian period, and the qualities and themes typical of such narratives. Highlighting the influence of the literary historian I. F. Clarke on this field, the survey considers the research of various other historians and literary critics, including A. Michael Matin, Michael Paris, and Richard Scully. Despite representing a varied and dynamic historiography, the chapter will argue that such studies have largely formed a consensus over the nature and function of British invasion literature. Drawing these two historiographical strands together, the chapter finishes with an extended explanation of this project's approach and methodology, stressing the importance of the Edwardian domestic political context when assessing British invasion literature.

By utilising this structure, the chapter is intended to function as an analytical arrowhead. This term describes the principle of providing historiographical context *before* elucidating the specific focus of the thesis, moving from the width of an arrow's base to its refined point. First identifying the broad historical period and location, in this case Edwardian Britain, the chapter then addresses a specific cultural element of this period, namely the late-Victorian and Edwardian phenomenon of invasion literature. Having

explored these narratives and their historiographical background, the final section of the chapter explains exactly how this thesis will engage with the source material, highlighting the number of texts under examination, the way in which they will be analytical approached, and the ideas or arguments such analysis will produce.

## 1.2 - Crisis or Golden Age? Trends in Edwardian Historiography

In his article 'The Sense of an Impending Clash' Standish Meacham has argued that "no era of English history presents a more bizarre and challenging puzzle" than the Edwardian age.<sup>25</sup> Such appeals to historical exceptionality, aside from being entirely unquantifiable, are very rarely helpful. Meacham is not alone, however, in stressing the unique quality of pre-1914 Britain. Bridging the historical gap between glorious Victorianism and the cataclysm of world war, the years in question have been described as having what might be termed a "frozen unity". As one historian proposed in 1955, the Edwardian age is one of those well-defined historical epochs which seem "to detach themselves from the general stream of events, to be, as it were, islands in time, countries of the imagination."<sup>26</sup> Looking back across the chasm of two world wars, the idea of an age transcending the linear historical narrative was perhaps understandably attractive. Though this sort of analysis now appears rather misleading, the abstract idea of pre-1914 Britain still conjures up unusually vivid associations and assured characteristics. This particular vision of Edwardian England is one of fixities and certainties, in which, as Samuel Hynes has described, "women wore picture hats and did not vote...and the sun really never set on the British flag."<sup>27</sup> Immortalised through the image of the 'long-garden party', this was a Britain of stability and prosperity in

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<sup>25</sup> S. Meacham, "'The Sense of an Impending Clash': English Working-class Unrest before the First World War", *American Historical Review*, 77.5 (1972), p. 1344.

<sup>26</sup> J. Laver quoted in A. Briggs, 'The Political Scene', in S. Nowell-Smith, ed, *Edwardian England, 1901-1914* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 45.

<sup>27</sup> S. Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 4.

which, as George Orwell facetiously remembered in *Coming up for Air*, “it was summer all the year round”.<sup>28</sup>

Just as the war did not play out through a four-year winter, the Edwardian period was not continually bathed in sunlight, either literally or figuratively speaking. As Donald Read has highlighted, the fine summer of 1911 was followed by the wet summer of 1912, just as the *belle époque* society of pre-war Britain had a parallel in contemporary movements of social and political upheaval.<sup>29</sup> Yet it was the former image that rose to the fore in the immediate post-war years, a development that pays tribute to the enormous impact of the First World War. Such was the “suddenness and completeness” of the shift from peace to war in August 1914, a belief emerged that the age now drawn to a close “had been some sort of domestic golden age of stability, prosperity and comfort...harshly shattered in a few frantic days of diplomatic manoeuvring followed by four years of dreadful war.”<sup>30</sup> This retrospective process began almost immediately following the outbreak of war. Writing to his brother in late August 1914, the novelist Henry James penned the following lament: “Black and hideous to me is the tragedy that gathers, and I’m sick beyond cure to have lived on to see it...It seems to me to *undo* everything that was ours, in the most horrible retroactive way.”<sup>31</sup> In the revealingly entitled *Ten Years After: A Reminder* (1924), Sir Phillip Gibbs’s remarks suggest that James was right to fear for the fate of his society:

One has to think back to another world to see again that year 1914 before the drums of war began to beat. It is a different world now, greatly changed, in the mental outlook of men and women, in the frontiers of the soul as well as the frontiers of nations...Old habits of thought

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<sup>28</sup> G. Orwell, *Coming up for Air* (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 37.

<sup>29</sup> D. Read, ed, *Edwardian England* (London: Croom Helm, 1982), p. 31. See also M. Kendon and J. Prior, ‘Two Remarkable British Summers – ‘perfect’ 1911 and ‘calamitous’ 1912’, *Weather, Climate Perspectives and Public Perception*, 66.7 (2011), pp. 179-184.

<sup>30</sup> Read, ed, *Edwardian England*, p. 27.

<sup>31</sup> B. R. McElderry, Jr., *Henry James* (New York: Twayne, 1965), p. 19.

have been smashed; old securities, traditions, obediences, convictions, lie in wreckage and, unlike the ruins of the war itself, will never be restored.<sup>32</sup>

The historiography of the Edwardian period is thus heavily shaped by a prevailing sense of loss. At the extremity of this sentiment is the idea of a teleological rupture, whereby war in 1914 represented an unprecedented break with the Whiggish historical narrative of inexorable progress. In *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Paul Fussell explores the idea that the First World War marked the end of “a seamless, purposeful ‘history’...a static world, where the values appeared stable and where the meanings of abstractions seemed permanent and reliable.”<sup>33</sup> Describing this idea as a product of “romantic retrospection turned even rosier by egregious contact with what followed”, Fussell nicely captures this ‘golden age’ image in his account of the last summer before war. Widely agreed to have been “the most idyllic for many years”, the immediate pre-war scene in Britain was “warm and sunny, eminently pastoral”, in which Britons “read outdoors, went on picnics, [and] had tea served from a white wicker table under the trees.” Rather than a defence of this imagined Edwardian idyll, Fussell instead aims to stress its remarkable cultural longevity. “For the modern imagination”, he continues, “that last summer has assumed the status of a permanent symbol for anything innocently but irrecoverably lost.”<sup>34</sup>

Though undoubtedly a compelling image, the ‘golden age’ retrospect of Edwardian Britain has never been universally accepted. This was a period of marked duality, where ostentation and security sat in close quarters with poverty and social conflict. Far from the ‘static world’ described by Fussell, this was an era of dynamism, of significant, tangible change. As the eminent Liberal C. F. G. Masterman wrote in 1908, “We are uncertain whether civilization is about to blossom into flower or wither in ruined tangle of dead leaves

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<sup>32</sup> P. Gibbs, *Ten Years After: A Reminder* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1925), p. 14.

<sup>33</sup> P. Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Twenty-Fifth Anniversary ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 21.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21-24.

and faded gold.”<sup>35</sup> The idea of an ‘Edwardian garden party’, while not entirely invalid, does not reflect the significant level of social upheaval and difficult political transition that equally characterised the epoch. Framed in the appropriate terms, pre-war Britain could be said to have experienced a steady, traumatic descent towards disaster rather than an abrupt cessation of Victorian stability. Moreover, this interpretation is not strictly revisionist, in that it arguably emerged alongside, or at least on the heels of the *belle époque* narrative. As early as 1928 J. R. M. Butler in his *History of England 1815-1918* described the period as “a nightmare of passion and paradox” where state authority “already challenged in Syndicalist theory, seemed to be collapsing in sober fact”.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, Elie Halevy’s second epilogue volume of the seminal *History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century* (published in English in 1934) includes a chapter entitled ‘Domestic Anarchy’.<sup>37</sup> It seems clear, therefore, that the ‘crisis’ and ‘golden age’ paradigms enjoy comparable historical foundations.

The idea of the ‘Edwardian Crisis’ was most famously articulated by George Dangerfield in *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (1935). An idiosyncratic portrayal of mounting social and political discord, Dangerfield’s narrative remains one of the most widely read accounts of the late-Edwardian period. The work hinges on a rebellious tripartite of women, workers, and Tories that mounted a semi-coordinated attack on Liberalism. Though these revolts emerged independently out of distinct political and economic grievances, Dangerfield saw them as enjoying a common psychology of rebellion, reacting against Victorian ideas of respectability and security. While Tory rebels abandoned the security of parliamentarianism and the traditional political process in courting Ulster paramilitarism, the ‘Women’s Rebellion’, embodied most evocatively in the militant activities of the Women’s Social and Political Union, was shaped by the abandonment of a “smothering...feminine

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<sup>35</sup> C. F. G. Masterman, ‘What the Age Looks Like’, *The Nation* (26<sup>th</sup> December, 1908), in D. Read, *Edwardian England 1901-1915, Society and Politics* (London: Harrap, 1972), p. 12.

<sup>36</sup> J. R. M. Butler, *History of England 1815-1918*, (London: T. Butterworth, 1928) in Read, ed, *Edwardian England*, p. 22.

<sup>37</sup> E. Halevy, *A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century – VI: The Rule of Democracy 1905-1914 (Book II)* (London: Ernest Benn, 1934), pp. 441-566.

security.”<sup>38</sup> Similarly, the ‘Workers Rebellion’ saw the unionised workforce of Britain mount “a profoundly unconscious assault upon respectability” by rejecting deferential notions of “honest labour”.<sup>39</sup> The ultimate victim of these related upheavals, as emphasised in Dangerfield’s title, was political Liberalism. Splitting in 1918 over David Lloyd George’s post-war coalition, the Liberals were eclipsed by the Labour Party in 1922, and would remain out of government until 2010. Yet it was also liberalism in its broadest sense that had died during the Edwardian period, as compromise and caution were abruptly replaced by violence and impatience. Attacked and undermined on all sides, liberalism in all its forms had become a burden for a nation “which wanted to revive a sluggish blood by running very fast in any direction.”<sup>40</sup>

Since it was first published *The Strange Death of Liberal England* has received its fair share of criticism. Various described as overly pessimistic, sensationalist, and “misleadingly neat”, Dangerfield’s vision of narrowly avoided revolution is now treated with significant historiographical caution.<sup>41</sup> For many political historians Dangerfield’s basic thesis of dying Liberalism is highly misrepresentative. As Chris Cook has recently argued, “the Liberal Party [in 1914] was certainly not dead, nor indeed dying”.<sup>42</sup> Though clearly going through a process of painful transition, Britain’s political infrastructure on the eve of war arguably remained both viable and functional. Perhaps more importantly, as Martin Pugh asserts, “the Liberal government was well entrenched in spite of the controversies surrounding it.”<sup>43</sup> Viewed in this light, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* becomes less a seminal account and more, as Ross McKibbin bluntly states, “a literary confection which

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<sup>38</sup> G. Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (London: Constable, 1936), pp. 138-9.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 207-209.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8. This thesis takes pains to distinguish between ‘liberalism’ as a broad socio-political concept and ‘Liberalism’ in the party-political sense. A similar effort has been made with ‘conservatism’ and ‘Conservatism’.

<sup>41</sup> Read, ed, *Edwardian England*, p. 23.

<sup>42</sup> C. Cook, *A Short History of the Liberal Party*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., ‘The Road Back to Power (Basingstoke: Houndmills, 2010), p. 60.

<sup>43</sup> M. Pugh, *State and Society, British Political and Social History 1870-1992* (London: Arnold, 1994), p. 143.

does not attempt serious analysis".<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, the work remains, in Carolyn White's words, "the linchpin of a major and continuing historiographical debate", as the various efforts of historians at vanquishing Dangerfield's argument have ultimately failed to dent its academic popularity. As White further asserts, "Mr. Dangerfield may be criticized, but he cannot be ignored so well entrenched is his place in Edwardian historiography."<sup>45</sup> Though few current historians would claim to wholly accept Dangerfield's thesis, the historiographical legacy of *The Strange Death of Liberal England* remains remarkably strong.<sup>46</sup>

Neither of these contrasting pictures of Edwardian Britain, of 'golden age' and of 'crisis', are flawless representations. As David Powell has convincingly argued, both of these concepts "are more than usually shaped by the wisdom of hindsight, just as 'Edwardian Britain'...is, in a sense, the retrospective creation of historians who know what happened after 1914."<sup>47</sup> Recognising the imperfect nature of these historical approaches, however, does not amount to rejecting them entirely. Rather than forming mutually exclusive explanations, it is now largely accepted that "conflict and stability coexisted in the Edwardian age".<sup>48</sup> Much recent scholarship has firmly focused on this 'coexisting' idea, especially in studies of Edwardian art. In *Edwardian Opulence: British Art at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century*, Angus Trumble and Andrea Wolk Rager suggest that these intractable competing images of Edwardian Britain partly emerged during the period itself:

...the Edwardian period draws its enduring fascination from the productive interstices set between diametrically opposed binaries: tradition and technology, languor and speed, rural and urban, local and global, nation and empire, conservatism and progressivism...the burden

<sup>44</sup> R. McKibbin, *The Evolution of the Labour Party 1910-1924* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 236.

<sup>45</sup> C. W. White, "'The Strange Death of Liberal England' in its Time", *Albion*, 17.4 (1985), p. 426. White's statements are arguably still accurate assessments of Edwardian historiography, despite being made nearly thirty years ago. *The Strange Death of Liberal England* remains a crucial text to any analysis of pre-1914 Britain. For recent examples of this see D. Powell, *Nationhood and Identity, The British State Since 1800* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2002), M. O'Neill and M. Hatt, eds, *The Edwardian Sense, Art, Design, and Performance in Britain, 1901-1910* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

<sup>46</sup> Writing in the introduction to *The Edwardian Age: Conflict and Stability, 1900-1914* (London: MacMillan, 1979), Alan O'Day credited the book's influence, asserting that most historians of the period would agree with the Dangerfieldian premise "that the Edwardian age was one of severe testing and crisis for liberalism", p. 2.

<sup>47</sup> D. Powell, *The Edwardian Crisis: Britain 1901-1914* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1996), vii.

<sup>48</sup> O'Day, ed, *The Edwardian Age*, p. 11.

of history and the boundless possibilities of the future. Both from our own vantage point and from the perspective of the Edwardians themselves, it was a time poised on the brink of destiny, self-consciously aware of a momentousness that would later be sustained by the onset of disastrous events.<sup>49</sup>

While the deterministic notion of 'self-conscious momentousness' is a reading unlikely to stand up to scrutiny, Trumble and Wolk Rager make an extremely important historiographical point, that ideas of Edwardian 'crisis' and 'golden age' existed contemporaneously, as two points of a continuum. By this argument the two paradigms represent complementary, intertwined explanations, rather than competing analyses. Furthermore, the 'crisis' and 'golden age' narratives transform through such a reading from historiographical constructs to historical phenomena. Not simply arbitrary explanations or romanticised imaginings, such paradigms appear as important cultural and social facets of the period itself.<sup>50</sup> This understanding of the contemporary value of the 'crisis' and 'golden age' concepts forms a crucial element of this project's analysis of Edwardian invasion literature, as will be explained in the final section of this chapter.

The interpretations outlined above represent the major pillars of Edwardian historiography. Before considering the period in more detail, however, it is worth emphasising that the very concept of 'Edwardian' is something of a misnomer. Strictly speaking, the 'Edwardian Age' spanned the short reign of Edward VII, from January 1901 to May 1910.<sup>51</sup> Yet historical studies of the Edwardian period have very rarely conformed to these dates. Though the death of Victoria in 1901 undoubtedly represented the end of an

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<sup>49</sup> A. Trumble and A. Wolk Rager, eds, *Edwardian Opulence: British Art at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), p. 3. See also J. Beckett and D. Cherry, eds, *The Edwardian Era* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1987), and O'Neill and Hatt, eds, *The Edwardian Sense*.

<sup>50</sup> The concluding chapter of J. B. Priestley's *The Edwardians* (London: William Heinemann, 1970), offers a valuable autobiographical take on this idea: "I do not believe I have any illusions about Edwardian England...But when the last illusion has been stripped away, something solid remains; there is that gleam of real gold in the wreck." See pp. 287-290.

<sup>51</sup> Vita Sackville-West's classic novel *The Edwardians* (London: Hogarth, 1930) is interesting in this regard, as its last chapter describes the coronation of George V, symbolically drawing the Edwardian period to a close. Similarly, Beckett and Cherry, eds, *The Edwardian Era*, is a study that largely restricts itself to the 'Edwardian Age' proper, 1901-1910.



era, and thus the birth of a new age, various dates prior to 1901 have been proposed and utilised as more appropriate historical starting points.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, analyses of the long Edwardian decade typically take the outbreak of war in August 1914 as a more suitable point at which to end.<sup>53</sup> This tendency reflects the cultural, social, and political significance of the First World War, an event that eclipsed in impact the death of the monarch, and as such, has offered a more attractive watershed to historians.<sup>54</sup> That said, even this well-established historical fault-line has been continually called into question.<sup>55</sup> Such problems of periodisation are by no means exceptional to the Edwardian era; indeed, very few historical 'periods' are likely to remain accepted without some challenge. Nonetheless, while historians will happily generalise about 'Victorianism' and 'modernism', they are generally less willing to flexibly utilise the problematic term 'Edwardian'. Perhaps the most consistent historiographical trait of the period is the idea of transition, as years during which "old and new ideas dwelt uneasily together."<sup>56</sup> As might be expected of an epoch defined by transition, many studies choose not to assess Edwardian Britain in its own right, but as an epilogue of the pre-war era, or conversely, a preface to twentieth century modernism.<sup>57</sup> Finally, some historians dispute the validity of Edwardian as a concept altogether.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Such starting points are naturally dependent on the focus and subject matter of particular studies. A. J. A. Morris's *The Scaremongers: The Advocacy of War and Rearmament 1896-1914* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), with its focus on declining Anglo-German relations, takes the infamous Kruger Telegram of 1896 as its natural beginning. Earlier still, J. Rose's intellectual history *The Edwardian Temperament* (Athens OH: Ohio University Press, 1986) takes 1895 as its starting point, a momentous year that included the Oscar Wilde trials and the subsequent public reaction against literary decadence, the colonial embarrassment of the Jameson Raid, and the last electoral defeat of Gladstone, xiii.

<sup>53</sup> In the preface to *Edwardian England, 1901-1914*, Simon Nowell-Smith referred to 4<sup>th</sup> August 1914 as "a tidy and convenient *terminus ad quem*", vi.

<sup>54</sup> For the standard account of the First World War as a major historical watershed see A. Marwick, *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War* (London: Bodley Head, 1965).

<sup>55</sup> As Rose emphasises in *The Edwardian Temperament*, Sir Edward Gray's lamps "did not go out all that abruptly", xiv. For other works that query the guillotine effect of August 1914 see Read, ed, *Edwardian England*, especially pp. 13-20, and C. Pennell, *A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>56</sup> Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*, p. 5.

<sup>57</sup> Examples of this include A. Wood, *Nineteenth Century Britain, 1815-1914* (London: Longmans, 1960), G. Searle, *A New England? Peace and War, 1886-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), and Pugh, *State and Society*.

<sup>58</sup> In *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (London: Bantam, 1989), Modris Eksteins promoted the idea of 'Victorian Synthesis'. Questioning received wisdom that the Edwardian period was one

Despite such questions of legitimacy, the extended Edwardian period has been the subject of a huge range of historical study. A significant proportion of these works concern the much-debated origins of the First World War, and Britain's role in and experience of this descent into conflict.<sup>59</sup> Indeed, many broader studies of the period have struggled to emerge from the retrospective shadow of war in 1914. This is highlighted to a degree in the use of historiographical terminology, most notably by the interchangeable nature of the terms 'Edwardian' and 'pre-war'. Even works that do not directly analyse the political or diplomatic origins of the First World War have regularly engaged with the conflict in an implicit sense. The outbreak of war in these accounts serves as a deterministic point of reference, in which Edwardian society had continually and inevitably advanced towards its tragic conclusion, as the condemned man walks to the gallows.<sup>60</sup> Much of the best research on the period has attempted to counter this crude fallacy, exploring and analysing the period in its own right rather than as the historical context of total war in Europe.<sup>61</sup> Part of this process was begun by Dangerfield in *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, as he questioned the war's status as a socio-political watershed. Stressing the pre-war domestic roots of post-war decline, Dangerfield argued that the war "hastened everything – in politics, in economics, in behaviour – but it started nothing."<sup>62</sup> The outbreak of war in 1914, then, is best understood as neither a beginning nor an end, but as an accelerator of long-term socio-political trends.

One of these long-term Edwardian trends was increasing political uncertainty, both in foreign and domestic policy. Such turbulence was, in part, a symptom of Britain's relative

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primarily of transition, he argues that "in values and judgements on issues of decency, the family, social and political order, and religion, the Edwardians were extensions of the Victorians", p. 130.

<sup>59</sup> The literature on this subject is vast, arguably dwarfing other areas of Edwardian study. Works of particular influence include J. Joll, *1914: The Unspoken Assumptions: An Inaugural Lecture Delivered 25 April 1968* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968), A. J. P. Taylor, *War by Time-table: How the First World War Began* (London: MacDonald, 1969), P. Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1980), J. Winter, *The Great War and the British People* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1986), Z. S. Steiner and K. Neilson, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003).

<sup>60</sup> This tendency is particularly common in autobiographies, or historical studies based largely on personal recollection. See E. Wingfield-Stratford, *Before the Lamps Went Out* (London: Hodder & Stroughton, 1945), and to a lesser extent G. Greene, *A Sort of Life* (London: Bodley Head, 1971).

<sup>61</sup> Though not stated as an explicit goal of the study, Nowell-Smith's large edited collection *Edwardian England* is a good example of this process of historiographical resurrection.

<sup>62</sup> Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, viii.

political and economic decline, as her nineteenth century commercial and industrial dominance began to be challenged by Germany and the United States.<sup>63</sup> This was thrown into sharp relief by the South African War of 1899 to 1902, a colonial conflict that highlighted the dangers of Britain's military weakness and (self-imposed) political isolation.<sup>64</sup> When combined with German plans for naval expansion, embodied in Admiral Tirpitz's Navy Laws of 1898 and 1900, Britain's global predominance began to look increasingly vulnerable. Responding to these changing circumstances, British foreign policy during the Edwardian period moved away from isolation towards engagement with European power politics, notably highlighted by the *Entente Cordiale* with France (1904) and the Anglo-Russian Convention (1907).<sup>65</sup> Representing a major shift in policy, British interests were by 1914 firmly invested in the continental balance of power. These developments were reinforced by Britain's evolving naval and military strategy. No longer convinced of the Royal Navy's invulnerability, Britain's eventual war plans hinged on the deployment of the British Expeditionary Force in Europe, operating on the flank of the French Army. In both strategic and diplomatic terms this heralded a major departure from the Victorian principle of 'splendid isolation'.<sup>66</sup>

This evolution of British foreign policy occurred alongside a change in understanding of Britain's imperial role. As Britain's economic and political supremacy came under concerted challenge, many Unionist commentators (notably Joseph Chamberlain through his tariff reform campaign) called for greater imperial integration, economic reform, and even

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<sup>63</sup> See A. L. Friedberg, *The Weary Titan: Britain and the Experience of Relative Decline, 1895-1905* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

<sup>64</sup> For the standard contemporary account see the seven volume study edited by L. S. Amery, *The Times History of the War in South Africa, 1899-1900* (London: Sampson Low, 1900-1909). A more recent account of the British experience of the South African War is J. Darwin, 'The Weakest Link: Britain in South Africa', *The Empire Project, The Rise and Fall of the British World System, 1830-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). See also D. Lowry, ed, *The South African War Reappraised* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

<sup>65</sup> Powell, *Nationhood and Identity*, p. 122. For a concise consideration of the Anglo-German naval race see P. M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (London: Lane, 1976), pp. 243-282.

<sup>66</sup> J. Gooch, *The Plans of War: the General Staff and British Military Strategy* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), K. Wilson, 'To the Western Front: British War Plans and the 'Military Entente' with France before the First World War', *British Journal of International Studies*, 3.2 (1977), J. Charmley, *Splendid Isolation?: Britain, the Balance of Power and the Origins of the First World War* (London: Hodder and Staughton, 1999).

proposed future political federation.<sup>67</sup> Held by its advocates as the answer to Britain's political and economic decline, a reformed, dynamic empire appeared to represent a natural model for national progression. In this such voices often appeared under the umbrella rubric of 'national efficiency', a largely intellectual movement that stressed the terminal nature of Britain's political disorganisation, and encouraged a variety of non-partisan campaigns for national rejuvenation.<sup>68</sup> Such proposals accompanied a marked increase in the cultural value of 'Empire'. Though this process began in the Victorian period, it reached new heights in the Edwardian years, as imperialism began to form a key facet of a specifically British nationalism. Heavily influenced through education (especially the public school system), the growth of codified team sports, and popular literature, by the 1920's "a British tradition had been created out of a political reality."<sup>69</sup> Yet with this recognition of imperial identity there came a great sense of anxiety, primarily about successfully securing a future for both nation and empire. Social-Darwinist theories of physical degeneration, threats of foreign invasion and espionage, and concerns over immigration and the spread of political radicalism were all identified as forces that undermined British strength and security. The long-Edwardian decade was thus a highly introspective period, in which identities were hotly contested and threats consistently envisaged.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> On the significant increase in conservative popular pressure groups such as the Tariff Reform League see F. Coetzee, *For Party or Country, Nationalism and the Dilemmas of Popular Conservatism in Edwardian England* (Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1990). See also M. Hendley, *Organised Patriotism and the Crucible of War: Popular Imperialism in Britain, 1914-1932* (Montreal: L McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012). For a broader study of the changing domestic politics of Empire see R. Shannon, *The Crisis of Imperialism, 1865-1915* (London: Hart-Davis MacGibbon, 1974).

<sup>68</sup> G. R. Searle, *The Quest for National Efficiency: A Study in British Politics and Political Thought, 1899-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971). See also R. J. Scally, *The Origins of the Lloyd George Coalition: The Politics of Social-Imperialism, 1900-1918* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).

<sup>69</sup> J. A. Mangan, "The Grit of Our Forefathers", *Invented Traditions, Propaganda and Imperialism*, in J. M. MacKenzie, ed, *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), p113. See also J. M MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984) and R. Colls and P. Dodd, eds, *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880-1920* (London: Croom Helm, 1986).

<sup>70</sup> On social Darwinism in Britain see R. Soloway, 'Counting the Degenerates: The Statistics of Race Deterioration in Edwardian England', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 17.1 (1982), R. Soloway, *Demography and Degeneration: Eugenics and the Declining Birthrate in Twentieth Century Britain* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), G. R. Searle, *Eugenics and Politics in Britain, 1900-1914* (Leyden: Noordhoff International Publishing, 1976). For broad studies on the fear of invasion (i.e. not focused specifically on invasion literature) see H. Moon, 'The Invasion of the United Kingdom: Public Controversy and Official

Political and cultural turbulence was equally apparent in the high politics of Westminster. Not only a testing period for Liberalism, the Edwardian years saw a series of ideological debates and crises of policy that affected Conservatism, Unionism, and the fledgling Labour movement.<sup>71</sup> These intra-party conflicts were exacerbated by activity on the political extremes, embodied most notably by the 'Radical Right', a fluid group of MPs, journalists, and political commentators on the margins of the Conservative Party.<sup>72</sup> Such party rebellions were one element of the domestic political upheaval that has been retrospectively labelled the 'Edwardian Crisis'. Though the validity of this term continues to be questioned, there is little historiographical disagreement that the Edwardian era was one of significant political discord and change.<sup>73</sup> A crucial element of such change is the aforementioned sense of Edwardian binaries; old versus new, tradition versus modernity. As Meacham explains, "almost all that the Victorians had claimed to cherish was in at least some measure [being] called into question" by ascendant political forces.<sup>74</sup> The militancy of female suffrage campaigners, reaching its peak during the Edwardian period under the stewardship of the Pankhurst family, called into question both the political establishment and

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Planning', unpublished PhD thesis (University of London, 1968), N. Longmate, *Island Fortress: The Defence of Great Britain 1603-1945* (London: Hutchinson, 1991), F. J. McLynn, *Invasion: from the Armada to Hitler, 1588-1945* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987). On the pre-1914 pan-European world of anarchism and radical politics see A. Butterworth, *The World that Never Was* (London: Bodley Head, 2010). See also P. Panayi, *The Enemy in our Midst: Germans in Britain during the First World War* (Providence and Oxford: Berg, 1991) and D. Glover, *Literature, Immigration and Diaspora in Fin-de-Siècle England: A Cultural History of the 1905 Aliens Act* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>71</sup> As D. Brooks has asserted in *The Age of Upheaval, Edwardian Politics, 1899-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), all the principle parties "faced an individual crisis of identity in these years", p. 4. On these respective party crises see Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, E. H. H. Green, *The Crisis of Conservatism, The Politics, Economics and Ideology of the British Conservative Party, 1880-1914* (London: Routledge, 1995), J. A. Thompson and A. Mejia, eds, *Edwardian Conservatism: Five Studies in Adaptation* (London: Croom Helm, 1988), and D. Dean, 'The Character of the early Labour Party, in O'Day, ed, *The Edwardian Age*.

<sup>72</sup> For more on the 'Radical Right' and its important influence on Edwardian invasion literature see pages 70-73. For similar figures and activity on the political Left see N. Redfern, *Class or Nation: Communists, Imperialism, and Two World Wars* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2005).

<sup>73</sup> The best account of the 'crisis' narrative is Powell, *The Edwardian Crisis*. For an interesting critical analysis of Powell's work see M. Pugh, 'The Edwardian Crisis: Britain, 1910 [sic]-1914', *Welsh History Review*, 19.1 (1998), p. 176-178. As Powell puts it in his book *Nationhood and Identity*, "much ink has been spilt" on this debate, p. 121. In brief, this includes D. Read, 'Crisis or Golden Age?', in *Edwardian England*, pp. 14-39, W. L. Arnstein, 'Edwardian Politics: Turbulent Spring or Indian Summer?', in O'Day, ed, *The Edwardian Age*, pp. 60-78, Pugh, *State and Society*, pp. 132-144, and J. Callaghan, 'The Edwardian Crisis: The Survival of Liberal England and the Rise of a Labour Identity', *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*, 33 (2012), pp. 1-24.

<sup>74</sup> Meacham, 'The Sense of an Impending Clash': English Working-class Unrest before the First World War, *American Historical Review*, p. 1355.

gendered power relations.<sup>75</sup> Similarly, the resurgence of Irish Home Rule as a political issue, complicated during the pre-war years by the strength of popular Unionism in Ulster, saw nationalism return to Westminster as a political force.<sup>76</sup> Entering Parliament in 1906 for the first time in large numbers was the newly renamed Labour Party. Paralleled in development by a huge increase in trade union membership, talk of a general strike in 1914 prior to the outbreak of war highlighted the extent to which Britain's empowered working class had abandoned Victorian notions of social deference.<sup>77</sup> Finally, the constitutional crisis of 1909-11, a damaging affair that ended with the narrow passing of the Parliament Act by a highly disgruntled House of Lords, saw Britain's constitutional infrastructure fundamentally, almost fatally questioned.<sup>78</sup> Crisis or otherwise, the political history of Edwardian Britain is not one of peaceful change or ordered constitutionalism.

This upheaval in the parliamentary system was not detached from society at large, but was reflective of the general state of flux that characterised the Edwardian period.<sup>79</sup> As Paul Thompson has asserted, the era's great political conflicts were not manufactured "at Whitehall breakfast parties", but were instead "manifestations of a deep self-questioning at

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<sup>75</sup> As with the origins of the First World War, this subject has received much scholarly attention. See B. Harrison, *Separate Spheres, The Opposition to Women's Suffrage in Britain* (London: Croom Helm, 1978), S. Buckley, 'The Family and the Role of Women', in O'Day, ed, *The Edwardian Age*, pp. 133-143, M. Pugh, *The March of the Women, A Revisionist Analysis of the Campaign for Women's Suffrage 1866-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>76</sup> Again, there is a huge body of research on Irish Home Rule and Edwardian Anglo-Irish relations. See R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (London: Penguin, 1988), R. F. Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch: Connections in Irish and English History* (London: Penguin, 1995), D. G. Boyce and A. O'Day, eds, *The Ulster Crisis: 1885-1921* (Basingstoke: Houndmills, 2006), K. Kenny, ed, *Ireland and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>77</sup> Once again, this is a massive area of research. See McKibbin, *The Evolution of the Labour Party, 1910-1924*, R. McKibbin, 'Why was there no Marxism in Great Britain?', *English Historical Review* 99.391, (1984), pp. 297-331, R. McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class: Social Relations in Britain, 1880-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), H. Pelling, *Popular Politics and Society in late Victorian Britain* (London: MacMillan, 1968).

<sup>78</sup> The standard narrative account of this extended controversy is R. Jenkins, *Mr Balfour's Poodle: An Account of the Struggle Between the House of Lords and the Government of Mr Asquith* (London: Collins, 1968). See also G. D. Phillips, *The Diehards: Aristocratic Society and Politics in Edwardian England* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), P. Norton, "Resisting the Inevitable? The Parliament Act 1911", *Parliamentary History*, 31.3 (2012), pp. 444-459.

<sup>79</sup> Interestingly, this 'flux' regularly appears in the historiography through the language of crisis, causing the largely political concept of the 'Edwardian Crisis' to significantly expand. For example, J. A. Hall, 'The Crisis of the Edwardian Intelligentsia, 1900-1920', unpublished PhD thesis (University of London, 1976), J. Coates, *Chesterton and the Edwardian Cultural Crisis* (Hull: Hull University Press, 1984), M. Chapman, *The Coming Crisis: The Impact of Eschatology on Theology in Edwardian England* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001).

all levels of society”.<sup>80</sup> Such self-questioning was partly driven by economic factors. While the upper classes were economically diversifying in recognition of the declining financial power of land, the working classes struggled against a long-term fall in real wages. Equally important was the changing nature of cultural practices, leisure activities, and the ongoing decline of strict religious observance. When compared to their early-Victorian forebears, Edwardians enjoyed a wider variety of recreational and cultural activities, had more time with which to engage in such practices, and were less likely to regularly attend church services.<sup>81</sup> Society was also changing in more concrete ways through the spread of modern technology in industry, the expansion of the electric grid, and the now near-universal level of literacy. The social infrastructure of Britain also underwent significant change in these years, largely the product of the groundbreaking Liberal social reforms.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, the Edwardian period continued the Victorian trend of high-emigration, with over two million people leaving England, Wales, and Scotland in the decade approaching 1914.<sup>83</sup>

It is clear even from such a brief sketch that Britain during the Edwardian period was experiencing significant social, political and cultural change.<sup>84</sup> Change is, of course, not always synonymous with crisis. Indeed, the prospect of change routinely highlighted a schism amongst Edwardian commentators between those who accepted change, and those who feared the looming transformations threatening British society. While one face of Edwardian Britain craved “a new earth, if not a new heaven”, the other lamented a lost fixity

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<sup>80</sup> P. Thompson, *The Edwardians: The Remaking of British Society*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Routledge, 1992), xvii.

<sup>81</sup> For economic trends see Thompson, *The Edwardians*, pp. 151-163. For changing patterns of leisure and cultural activity see H. Cunningham, ‘Leisure and Culture’, in F. M. L. Thompson, ed, *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750-1950, Vol. 2: People and their Environment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 279-340, and Searle, ‘The Pursuit of Pleasure’, in *A New England*.

<sup>82</sup> See J. R. Hay, *The Origins of the Liberal Welfare Reforms, 1906-1914* (London: Macmillan, 1975). For an interesting essay on the mixed reception that met the Liberal reforms see Pelling, ‘The Working Class and the Origins of the Welfare State’, in *Popular Politics and Society in Late Victorian Britain*, pp. 1-20.

<sup>83</sup> Thompson, *The Edwardians*, p. 154.

<sup>84</sup> One of the best studies of ‘change’ in this period is S. Kern’s *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1983). Not simply an age of physical, tangible change, Kern argues that the technological advances and cultural change of the period created “distinctive new modes of thinking about and experiencing time and space”, p. 1.

and a familiar socio-political structure.<sup>85</sup> As Read asserts, “Change, pressure for change, and fear of change were widely apparent in Edwardian England”.<sup>86</sup> This contemporary experience of transition is reflected in the mutually inclusive binary of ‘crisis’ and ‘golden age’ outlined above, whereby pre-1914 Britain was paradoxically stable and in conflict, both secure and unsteady. This context is crucial to understanding contemporary invasion literature. Narratives of invasion and future-war, to which this chapter now turns, are a forum in which the subjective experience of change is strikingly communicated.

### 1.3 - British invasion and future-war literature 1871-1914

The study of British invasion literature owes much to the late literary historian I. F. Clarke. His contribution of varied research, prolific writing, and tireless work archiving a vast body of popular literature was undoubtedly ground-breaking. As David Seed has recently asserted, “Clarke single-handedly pioneered the study of a startlingly extensive body of fiction which had more or less been ignored in histories of literature since the eighteenth century”.<sup>87</sup> In his earliest work ‘The Future in Fiction, 1850-1900’ (1950), Clarke recognised the unavoidably provisional nature of his conclusions, highlighting that as there was “no bibliography of the future in fiction”, he was treading new and little-understood ground.<sup>88</sup> As it was, he would go on to write this much-needed bibliography himself, first published in 1961 as *The Tale of the Future from the Beginning to the Present Day*. A remarkable archival and bibliographic achievement, the work represents, as described by its full title,

an annotated bibliography of those satires, ideal states, imaginary wars and invasions, coming catastrophes and end-of-the-world stories, political warnings and forecasts, inter-

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<sup>85</sup> *The New Age* (26<sup>th</sup> January 1911), quoted in D. Read, *England 1868-1914, The Age of Urban Democracy* (London: Longman, 1979), p. 437.

<sup>86</sup> Read, *Edwardian England*, p. 380.

<sup>87</sup> D. Seed, ed, *Future Wars: The Anticipations and the Fears* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), p. 1. This collection of essays and articles, including Clarke’s 1997 article ‘Future-War Fiction: The First Main Phase, 1871-1900’, also contains a comprehensive check-list of I. F. Clarke’s vast body of writing, pp. 267-272.

<sup>88</sup> I. F. Clarke, ‘The Future in Fiction, 1850-1900’, unpublished BA thesis (University of Liverpool, 1950), i.



planetary voyages and scientific romances--all located in an imaginary future period--that have been published in the United Kingdom between 1644 and 1976.<sup>89</sup>

Though not detailed in terms of authorial biography, certainly in comparison to E. F. Bleiler's catalogue *Science Fiction: The Early Years*, Clarke's 'check-list' represents a major milestone in the study of British speculative fiction.

As *The Tale of the Future* highlights, Clarke's research was not confined to narratives of future-war and invasion, but was shaped by an interest in the literary nature of speculation, or in other words, the consistencies and discrepancies in fictional treatments of 'the future'. In *The Pattern of Expectation 1644-2001*, a work aiming to "examine the idea of the future in all its major manifestations", Clarke refers to the "discovery of the future", identifying it as a literary trend of the late eighteenth century.<sup>90</sup> A period in which "mankind was entering on a new way of life" while science was "ending the ancient domination of nature", social and technological advances were encouraging authors "to look upon the past as a panorama of evolutionary change and on the future as a scenario that could reveal every imaginable kind of development."<sup>91</sup> Tracing the development of literary utopias and dystopias, and of early science fiction and future-war speculation, Clarke stresses the fluid, ever-changing nature of 'the future' as a medium, acting as "the register of moods in a changing society and a running commentary on the search for final solutions to all human problems."<sup>92</sup> Notably for this thesis, Clarke suggests such understandings reached their apex during the Edwardian period. Inescapably gripped by the notions of movement, change, and progress, many contemporary writers, including "Wells, Shaw, Bennett, [and] Galsworthy", considered the concept of the past to have "been largely

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<sup>89</sup> I. F. Clarke, *The Tale of the Future, From the Beginning to the Present Day*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Library Association, 1978).

<sup>90</sup> I. F. Clarke, *The Pattern of Expectation 1644-2001* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1979), p. 2.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 46-58.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.

discredited...something crude, outworn, [and] dead.” By contrast, the future remained, for better or worse, endless in its possibilities.<sup>93</sup>

Aside from his writings on speculative fiction, Clarke additionally edited several collections of narrative extracts, such as *The Tale of the Next Great War, 1871-1914* (1995), and *The Great War with Germany, 1890-1914* (1997).<sup>94</sup> Of particular note is his eight volume series *British Future Fiction*, a collection of reprinted novels and short stories that incorporates, among other works, *Three Hundred Years Hence* by William Delisle Hay (first published 1881) and George Chesney's *The Battle of Dorking* (1871). The separate volume titles include *New Worlds*, *The Marvels of Mechanism*, *The Next Great War*, and *Disasters to Come*, highlighting the significant changes in how pre-1914 British fiction harnessed the idea of the future. Between these various publications lies a sense of Clarke's thematic parameters; what he understood to constitute literary speculation, and more specifically, how he defined future-war and invasion-scare fiction. Recognising in *The Great War with Germany* that accounts “of naval engagements, land campaigns, and invasions” were naturally varied and diffuse, “all their authors began by looking into the future”. This unquestioning acceptance “that it was their duty to anticipate and describe the causes and consequences of ‘the Next Great War’” was a commonality that, in Clarke's view, made this large body of authors “penfellows of a kind.”<sup>95</sup>

Clarke's approach to the thematic and stylistic boundaries of invasion literature is thus broad and, though not necessarily suffering for it, somewhat unformulated. A more concerted attempt to provide a sense of literary definition for invasion literature has been made by A. Michael Matin. In his thesis ‘Securing Britain: Figures of Invasion in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Fiction’, Matin establishes a typology for invasion narratives

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>94</sup> Similar collections have also been edited by the science fiction writer Michael Moorcock, namely *Before Armageddon* (London: W. H. Allen, 1976), and *England Invaded: a Collection of Fantasy Fiction* (London: W. H. Allen, 1977). In the former Moorcock offers a mild critique of Clarke, arguing that his analytical style focuses on “the social rather than the literary”, p. 6.

<sup>95</sup> I. F. Clarke, *The Great War with Germany, 1890-1914, Fictions and Fantasies of the War-to-come* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1997), p. 1.

consisting of seven motifs “so recurrent that they constitute virtually constitutive elements of the form”.<sup>96</sup> This useful and important typology, establishing as it does the common features and themes of this broad body of fiction, is reproduced below:

- (1) Appeals to the reader’s senses of patriotism and shame, often via evidence of national complacency or ‘racial’ decline
- (2) Denouncements of irresponsible (usually Liberal) English politicians, including:
  - (a) representations of foreign policy deficiencies and
  - (b) exposures of English military shortcomings (armaments, manpower, strategy)
- (3) Xenophobic depictions of subversive foreigners (often spies or *saboteurs*) on English soil prior to invasion
- (4) Strategic uses of near-future settings for hostilities
- (5) Strategic uses of familiar local detail, particularly:
  - (a) geographical verisimilitude and
  - (b) destructions of English national landmarks (monuments of English power and national pride)
- (6) Demonstrations of the vulnerability of the territories of the British Empire (as distinct from England or Great Britain itself)
- (7) Decisive conclusions to hostilities: either England is defeated (at worst, occupied) and the British Empire dismembered or the nation and empire are strengthened by the experience of invasion<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> A. Michael Matin, ‘Securing Britain: Figures of Invasion in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Fiction’, unpublished PhD thesis (Columbia University 1997), p. 15.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

Even with this typology in place, invasion literature arguably remains a porous and inherently ill-defined genre. The fear of invasion, for example, was closely related to the belief that foreign espionage networks were operating with impunity in Britain. Referring to “the myth of the evil and ubiquitous German spy”, David French has stressed that British “spy fever” - famously encouraged by works of espionage fiction, including William Le Queux’s *Spies of the Kaiser* - was instrumental in the establishment of MI5, as well as heavily influencing the passing of the Official Secrets Act in 1911.<sup>98</sup> German immigrants in Britain appeared to represent a dangerous fifth column of former conscripts, ready to mobilise upon the outbreak of war between Britain and Germany. These sensationalist visions, as Nicholas Hiley has argued, owed far more to espionage fiction than they did to the situation on the ground. Even British counter-espionage officers had “little opportunity of testing fiction against reality”, such was the strength of Edwardian spy fever compared with the relative weakness of German espionage in Britain.<sup>99</sup> This gap between perception and reality, as will be emphasised below, is equally apparent in invasion literature, as the strategic likelihood of foreign attack often had little bearing on fictional invasion narratives. Furthermore, the genres are also closely related in style and form, as both are shaped by what Wesley Wark labels “the artifice of apparent realism”. Through semi-autobiographical characters, plots, and settings, such works are “plausible or believable fictions of history”.<sup>100</sup> While this thesis is framed as a study of Edwardian invasion narratives, it is important to recognise that espionage fiction is, at times, barely distinguishable from invasion literature.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> D. French, ‘Spy Fever in Britain, 1900-1915’, *Historical Journal*, 21.2 (1978), pp. 355-370.

<sup>99</sup> N. Hiley, ‘Decoding German Spies: British Spy Fiction 1908-18’, *Intelligence and National Security*, 5.4 (1990), p. 61

<sup>100</sup> W. K. Wark, ‘Introduction: Fictions of History’, in *Spy Fiction, Spy Films and Real Intelligence* (London: Frank Cass and Co., 1991), p. 1.

<sup>101</sup> For more on Edwardian spy-scares and espionage fiction see B. Porter, *Plots and Paranoia: A History of Political Espionage in Britain 1790-1988* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), pp. 125-129, C. Bloom, *Spy Thrillers, From Buchan to le Carré* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1990), D. A. T. Stafford, ‘Spies and Gentlemen: The Birth of the British Spy Novel, 1883-1914’, *Victorian Studies*, 24.4 (1981), pp. 489-509, D. A. T. Stafford, *The Silent Game: The Real World of Imaginary Spies* (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1991), M. Priestman, ed, *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

The most concerted study of invasion literature is Clarke's survey *Voices Prophesying War: Future Wars 1763-3749*, a work that tracks the evolution of European future-war fiction from the eighteenth century onwards, with a particular focus on British examples.<sup>102</sup> In this study Clarke emphasises the importance of George Chesney's genre-defining short story *The Battle of Dorking*.<sup>103</sup> Published by *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1871 in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War, Chesney's piece achieved huge popularity through speculating on the consequences of French defeat: an ascendant and unified Germany dominating the power-politics of the continent. Depicting a brutally efficient successful German invasion of Britain, Chesney's contribution had "showed Europe how to manipulate the new literature of anxiety and belligerent nationalism".<sup>104</sup> The author's "most telling contrivance", as Clarke identifies, was his use of the retrospective, transforming the traditional military tract into a far more vivid style of narrative, "presenting all his propaganda through the experiences of the Volunteer who tells the story"<sup>105</sup>. The narrative is thus the words of a grandfather to his grandchildren, set fifty years following the events he describes. This was a simple yet hugely effective technique, and became something of a blueprint for authors of invasion and future-war fiction in the years approaching 1914.<sup>106</sup> Providing a new precedent in both literary quality and method, the success of *The Battle of Dorking* "helped to launch a new type of purposive fiction". Speculations of future-war were no longer idle or lacking in political purpose, but were shaped by the propagandist intent of their authors.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> This is the second edition of the work, and contains some major revisions. The first edition, *Voices Prophesying War 1763-1984* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), finishes with a sweeping survey of post-1918 science fiction entitled 'From the Nations in Arms to the Post-Warfare State, 1918-1984', pp. 162-208. The second edition, *Voices Prophesying War: Future Wars 1763-3749*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), splits this final chapter in two, providing extended analyses of pre and post-1945 science fiction and future-war narratives. All further citations of *Voices Prophesying War* will refer to the second edition.

<sup>103</sup> The dust-jacket summary of *Voices Prophesying War* describes *The Battle of Dorking* as "the first recognisable classic of the genre".

<sup>104</sup> Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War*, p. 38.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>106</sup> One particularly significant work indebted to Chesney's retrospective style was *The War of the Worlds* by H. G. Wells (London: Harper and Brothers, 1898) told from a vantage point of six years. Similarly, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire* by E. E. Mills was fashioned as a Japanese school textbook of 2005, ruminating on the collapse of "our late Ally" (Oxford: Alden and Co., 1905).

<sup>107</sup> Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War*, p. 33.

Identifying this opening stage of the genre's development as "the break-in phase", Clarke highlights a second phase of invasion literature, loosely ranging from 1880 to 1914, that saw significant changes in both form and content. Above all, this period in the fiction's evolution was characterised by huge expansion. Responding to an ever-growing mass media that catered, thanks to the Education Acts of 1870 and 1880, for a newly literate mass populace, what had been a narrow literary exchange transformed into a more open market "in which distinguished admirals competed and sometimes co-operated with enterprising journalists for the attention of the general reader."<sup>108</sup> Describing the typical second-phase narrative as "violent and vindictive both in matter and in manner", Clarke emphasises the increasingly sensationalist nature of such publications. Far from the "controlled emotion" of Chesney, these later narratives gave way "to excited language, crude emotionalism, and an often foolish idealisation of the nation".<sup>109</sup> They were also typically much longer than the short-story format of *The Battle of Dorking* and its various imitators, largely because of the necessities of newspaper serialisation. Dominated by a new set of journalistic writers such as Louis Tracy and William Le Queux, a new 'standard formula' emerged, combining some form of contemporary anxiety (such as, in the 1880's, the proposals for a channel tunnel) with "a racy and exciting narrative", while often providing further verisimilitude through the evocation of "eminent contemporary figures".<sup>110</sup> This later form of invasion literature proved more durable than its predecessor, lasting without major changes until the outbreak of war in 1914.

Aside from issues of origin and development of literary form, Clarke's analysis of pre-1914 invasion literature in *Voices Prophesying War* is based on two major premises, the first of which concerns the 'forecasting' nature of such literature. Though varying significantly between reasoned assessment and wild prediction, narratives of invasion and future-war

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 58. George Griffith's *The World Peril of 1910* (London: F. V. White and Co., 1907), for example, includes representations of Edward VII, Kaiser Wilhelm II and Tsar Nicholas II, as well as the military hero Robert Baden-Powell.

became one of the primary methods of speculating on how technological advance would shape modern warfare. These literary forecasts spanned a wide spectrum of technologies and theatres, from the late-Victorian spike in tales of industrialised naval conflict and submarine warfare,<sup>111</sup> to Edwardian visions of growing military mobilisation and aerial bombardment.<sup>112</sup> Yet despite this enthusiasm for engaging with ‘the future’, this “great enterprise of predicting what was going to happen”, these narratives are unified only in their ultimate failure. Despite rare and often notable exceptions, such works “are distinguished by a complete failure to foresee the form a modern war would take”. For Clarke, this failure was inevitable:

It was the result of the now familiar time-lag between the rapid development of technology and the belated abandonment of ideas, mental habits, and social attitudes that the new machines had rendered out-of-date. When men thought of war they did not foresee the struggles of great armies and anonymous masses of conscripts that finally came to pass. Instead, drawing on an imagination still burdened by a long tradition, which presented war as an affair of brief battles and heroic deeds by individuals, they underestimated the scale of actual warfare.<sup>113</sup>

The great irony of the pre-war age, then, was that constant literary and media engagement with the threat of future conflict did not prepare British society for modern warfare, but obscured its eventual reality. The now famous celebratory crowds and long lines of recruits in August 1914 were thus, in Clarke’s eyes, “cheering for a war that never came.”<sup>114</sup>

Such invasion narratives were, of course, not simply one-dimensional speculations dealing solely in an imagined future. As the second major premise of *Voices Prophesying War* emphasises, these fictions equally reflected contemporary anxieties and socio-political

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<sup>111</sup> Including *In a Conning Tower* (1891) by the Unionist politician H. O. Arnold-Forster, G. Griffith, *The Raid of Le Vengeur* (1901), both reproduced in I. F. Clarke, ed, *British Future Fiction* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2001), and J. Eastwick, *The New Centurion: A Tale of Automatic Warfare* (1895), I. F. Clarke, ed, *The Tale of the Next Great War, 1871-1914* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995).

<sup>112</sup> For the latter see H. G Wells, *The War in the Air* (New York: Boni and Liveright, inc., 1917), S. Mattingly, *The Terror by Night* (London: Pearson, 1913).

<sup>113</sup> Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War*, p. 64.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

developments. More than a vague or ephemeral record, Clarke suggests that the path of invasion and future-war fiction between 1880 and 1914 “presents a perfect mirror image of the international situation at the time of writing.”<sup>115</sup> By comparing the European output of such narratives during the period, Clarke plots the precarious course of continental diplomacy, the waxing and waning of national grievances, and the impact of political flashpoints on book publication. “Each moment of international crisis”, such as the Fashoda incident in 1898 and the 1911 Agadir crisis, “at once sets off an outburst of propaganda stories and warning visions of the future.”<sup>116</sup> The best example of this phenomenon is how the emerging structure of European alliances affected such narratives. Taking *The Battle of Dorking* as an obvious exception, late-Victorian invasion literature still imagined the traditional enemy France as the likely invader, often in opportunist alliance with Russia.<sup>117</sup> Yet the decline in Anglo-German relations, largely hinging on the German naval construction programmes of 1898 and 1900 and coinciding with Britain’s protracted military intervention in South Africa, inspired a shift in fictional foes. By the signing of the *Entente Cordiale* in 1904, Germany had replaced France as the primary menace in British fiction of invasion, highlighted in particular by Erskine Childers’s much celebrated 1903 work *The Riddle of the Sands*. Reflecting seismic shifts in the European political and diplomatic balance, this change in fictional enemy presaged something of a golden age for this branch of literary speculation. In the decade approaching 1914, as Clarke argues, “the growing antagonism between Britain and Germany was responsible for the largest and most sustained development of the most alarmist and aggressive stories of future warfare ever seen in European history.”<sup>118</sup>

This idea of ‘mirroring’ raises questions as to the relationship between representation and reflection on one side, and influence or popular conditioning on the other. In other

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Examples of this include William Le Queux’s early epic *The Great War in England in 1897* (London: Tower Publishing Co., 1894), F. N. Maude, *The New Battle of Dorking* (London: G. Richards, 1900), and C. A. Clarke, *Starved into Surrender* (London: C. W. Daniel, 1904).

<sup>118</sup> Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War*, p. 118.



words, was this change of enemy in British invasion literature responding to the decline in Anglo-German relations, or were such narratives actively contributing to or even creating this antagonism? For Clarke, this dynamic leans towards the latter:

For the first time in the history of international politics, as a direct result of universal literacy and mass journalism, the writing of popular fiction had begun to have a recognizable effect on the relations between countries, since the tales of the war-to-come encouraged British and Germans to see themselves as inevitable enemies.<sup>119</sup>

Emphasising the link between gradually increasing Anglo-German animosity and the significant success of both British and German future-war fiction, Clarke suggests such narratives “had become a recognizable and potentially dangerous element in the European situation.”<sup>120</sup>

As is stressed above, *Voices Prophesying War* is a comprehensive and well-executed survey. Though it is not without methodological and analytical drawbacks, it remains the authoritative study of European invasion and future-war fiction. This is reflected by the large number of broad historical accounts that include sections on this literature, as they are almost always heavily indebted to Clarke’s work. Though such studies are right to reference the political, literary, and cultural significance of such fiction in the pre-1914 period, they usually offer nothing new in terms of analytical style or approach.<sup>121</sup> Nevertheless, there have been further studies of invasion and future-war fiction that have advanced and, to some degree, reinterpreted this field. The most significant contributor to this historiography after Clarke is A. Michael Matin, whose seven motif ‘typology’ is included above. His thesis ‘Securing Britain’ predominantly focuses on three authors ‘shaped’ by the invasion genre,

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>121</sup> A case in point here is Niall Ferguson’s *The Pity of War* (London: Allen Lane, 1998). The work’s opening chapter ‘The Myths of Militarism’ begins with a fairly lengthy survey of British invasion literature which Ferguson acknowledges is “drawn largely from I. Clarke”, p. 469.

namely Rudyard Kipling, Joseph Conrad, and H. G. Wells.<sup>122</sup> This approach represents an important attempt to realign the relationship between invasion narratives and ‘high-brow’ late-Victorian and Edwardian literature. Recognising that “the traditionally selective vision of literary history tends to filter out subcanonical forms”, Matin’s study aims to highlight the regular appearance of invasion themes within the work of said authors, and in doing so, emphasise their status as participants “in a prevalent literary phenomenon.”<sup>123</sup> The debt authors such as Wells, Conrad, and particularly Kipling owe to the “xenophobes and war-mongers” that populate the genre’s authorship has, Matin suggests, “been for the most part erased” by traditional works of literary criticism.<sup>124</sup>

Using these three writers as case studies, Matin analyses their literary output through the rubric of ‘invasion literature’. In the case of Rudyard Kipling, Matin stresses the influence of location on his understanding of imperial and national defence. Residing at different times in “the Achilles’ heels of both the empire and the nation”, namely Lahore in northwest India and the Sussex coast in south eastern England, Kipling was “strongly conditioned by...a sense of the importance of place”.<sup>125</sup> His preoccupation with invasion was in part the product, Matin suggests, of this sense of geographic military susceptibility in both his colonial and national circumstances. Rather than representing separate military or political scenarios, Kipling (and many of his contemporaries) considered there to be no meaningful distinction between nation and empire. As such, national and imperial securities were seen as indivisible. The threat of Russian intrigue in India explored in *Kim*, and themes of military preparation, espionage and invasion in *Puck of Pook’s Hill*, ‘The Army of a Dream’, and ‘The

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<sup>122</sup> Several articles have since been published out of these case study-like chapters. See “‘We Aren’t German Slaves Here, Thank God’: Conrad’s Transposed Nationalism and British Literature of Espionage and Invasion’, *Journal of Modern Literature*, 21.2 (1997-98), pp. 251-280, and “‘The Hun is at The Gate!’: Historicizing Kipling’s Militaristic Rhetoric, from the Imperial Periphery to the National Center’, *Studies in the Novel*. The latter appears in two parts, ‘The Russian Threat to British India’, 31.3 (1999), pp. 317-356, and ‘The French, Russian, and German Threats to Great Britain’, 31.4 (1999), pp. 432-470.

<sup>123</sup> Matin, “‘The Hun is At The Gate!’: Historicizing Kipling’s Militaristic Rhetoric, from the Imperial Periphery to the National Center’, ‘The Russian Threat to British India’, *Studies in the Novel*, p. 321.

<sup>124</sup> Matin, ‘Securing Britain’, p. 85.

<sup>125</sup> Matin, “‘The Hun is At The Gate!’: Historicizing Kipling’s Militaristic Rhetoric, from the Imperial Periphery to the National Center’, ‘The Russian Threat to British India’, *Studies in the Novel*, p. 318.

Edge of the Evening' are thus threads of the same fabric, "intertwined and mutually reinforcing".<sup>126</sup>

When considering Joseph Conrad's use of "many of the signal devices of both espionage and invasion fiction", Matin emphasises the importance of his *émigré* status. Born and brought up in Russian-occupied Poland, Conrad's fictional themes concerning the cultural and political invasion of Britain play out "in a displaced way, his own [Polish] nationalistic preoccupations".<sup>127</sup> His sense of unease over the condition of Britain was thus closely linked to his lamentation for Polish independence. Matin draws in particular on the invasion tropes of *The Secret Agent*, a work which depicts "a London effectively denationalised by malevolent foreigners, a generalised xenophobia...[and] a British population in a state of physical and mental decline".<sup>128</sup> Finally, Matin analyses the "fundamentally ambivalent" politics of H. G. Wells, whose purported internationalism and anti-imperialism ran alongside familiar fears "of the urban 'mob' and of foreign invasion".<sup>129</sup> Stressing the insular, 'British' nature of Wells's socialism, his opposition to foreign literary influences including Conrad and Henry James, and a low yet persistent level of xenophobia and anti-Semitism, Matin highlights the evident similarity between Wells and the authorship of invasion literature. Throughout his writings, but especially in the case of *The War of the Worlds*, *The War in the Air*, and *Tono-Bungay*, Wells imagines an England "for which the act of military invasion is largely redundant, the country's wealth and vitality having already been drained by plutocrats, Jews, and opportunistic newspaper proprietors alike."<sup>130</sup>

Clarke's large research output alongside Matin's thesis and series of articles thus represent the basic skeleton of this historiography. There is, however, a significant range of works and researchers that have contributed, directly and indirectly, to the study of

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid., p. 321,

<sup>127</sup> Matin, "'We Aren't German Slaves Here, Thank God': Conrad's Transposed Nationalism and British Literature of Espionage and Invasion", *Journal of Modern Literature*, p. 253.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., p. 260.

<sup>129</sup> Matin, 'Securing Britain', pp. 211 and 225.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p. 274.

Edwardian invasion literature. The earliest such example is Howard Moon's vast thesis 'The Invasion of the United Kingdom: Public Controversy and Official Planning' (1968). Tracking the interplay of evolving military and naval defence strategy with the popular experience and understanding of the invasion bogey, the study focuses on "the bitter struggle for predominance" between the Army and the Navy, embodied in five lengthy reviews through the newly established Committee of Imperial Defence.<sup>131</sup> This struggle was in essence between the 'Blue Water' notion of Naval-led deterrence and 'Bolt from the Blue' theories of surprise attack. This debate was further complicated by the huge popular interest it generated, highlighted notably by the mass production of invasion literature. Citing *The Battle of Dorking* as setting an important precedent, Moon records how such works opened up this special interest debate to a mass audience, and as such, "became a means for protagonists of a more efficient home defence to reach the general public".<sup>132</sup> The thesis offers good extended analysis of many invasion and future-war narratives, including a lengthy passage on the success of Guy du Maurier's invasion-scare play *An Englishman's Home*.<sup>133</sup> These "paper wars" are presented as propagandist tracts, amplifying rather than creating an invasion controversy.<sup>134</sup> Such narratives, argues Moon, were one facet of a pre-war "national obsession", a symptom rather than the predominant cause of periodic invasion scares.<sup>135</sup>

One of the best brief accounts of British invasion literature is in Samuel Hynes's cultural history *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*. Describing the genre as "an odd sub-category of popular fiction", Hynes presents invasion literature as part of the cultural response to an age of transition and uncertainty, arguing that it was influenced by a deep "anxiety and

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<sup>131</sup> H. Moon, 'The Invasion of the United Kingdom: Public Controversy and Official Planning', unpublished PhD thesis (University of London, 1968), p. 2.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., pp. 398-407.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., p. 652.

apprehension for what that New Age might bring”.<sup>136</sup> His analysis focuses on seven of the most significant, successful, and enduring titles, ranging from the anonymous pamphlet *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire* (1905) through to Saki’s dystopian short-story *When William Came* (1913). Asserting that all such novels were in some way polemical, Hynes additionally stresses that “all were concerned to answer the question, what is the matter with England?”<sup>137</sup> The answers to this question naturally varied, from calls for increased vigilance and naval expenditure in *The Riddle of the Sands*, to the tentative pacifism of Wilfred Newton’s *War*. Interestingly, Hynes suggests such answers grew less and less clear as the period wore on, as authors appeared to lose confidence in Britain’s ability to successfully defeat or foil foreign invasion. Outlining this discernible pattern, “from invasion anticipated and foiled, to invasion easily defeated, to invasion defeated with difficulty and at political expense, to defeat and occupation”, Hynes presents this trend as evidence of “a loss in national self-confidence”.<sup>138</sup> Clearly, as Hynes himself recognises, such a survey is an imperfect illustration of a wider national mood. Nevertheless, he is right in his emphasis: Edwardian invasion narratives do grow increasingly pessimistic, and as such, suggest national self-confidence amongst the authorship was in decline.

Turning towards more specific analytical approaches, various studies have utilised future-war and invasion literature to contextualise the ‘industrialisation of warfare’, a term describing the technological revolution in weaponry and its effect on European preparation for war. As Antulio Echevarria asserts in *Imagining Future War*, the three decades prior to 1914 “were some of the most dynamic in the history of Europe and the United States”, during which technological advance, scientific achievement and industrial output hugely

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<sup>136</sup> Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*, pp. 34 and 16. Other works with similarly broad summaries include J. S. Meisel, ‘The Germans are Coming! British Fiction of a German Invasion, 1871-1913’, *War, Literature, and the Arts*, 2.2 (1990), pp. 41-79, Panayi, *The Enemy in our Midst*, pp. 32-36, J. Ramsden, *Don’t Mention the War: the British and the Germans since 1890* (London: Little, Brown, 2006), pp. 56-59 and 71-74, Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, pp. 18-20.

<sup>137</sup> Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*, p. 44.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

increased.<sup>139</sup> In a study that compares the fiction of such authors as Wells, Le Queux, and Albert Robida to the strategic theorising of armed forces professionals, both groups are shown to have fallen victim to Clarke's notion of a 'failure in imagination'. Yet Echevarria emphasises the different shortfalls that lay behind such failures, drawing distinction between optimistic and pessimistic narratives, utopias and dystopias, and most importantly, between visions of the short-term and the long-term influence of technology. Recognising that military thinkers of the period are commonly thought "to have fared rather poorly at envisioning future war", this was arguably the product of their focus on the "practical short-term".<sup>140</sup> Military and naval literature was focused primarily "on the immediate future in an attempt to solve specific problems, usually of a tactical or technological nature." The amateur visionaries of early science fiction, by contrast, were far less temporally and thematically shackled.<sup>141</sup> Falling primarily into the latter category, Echevarria suggests that the authorship of invasion literature made little effort "to ground...forecasts in actual events, or to verify apparent trends."<sup>142</sup> Crucially, both military professionals and amateur writers used the future "as a means rather than an end", aiming to shape contemporary military strategy and society through speculative, often opportunistic visions, rather than to seamlessly predict or prophesy.<sup>143</sup>

Such authorial and contextual distinctions, though clearly valuable, are open to interpretation. In *Rumors of War and Infernal Machines*, Charles Gannon argues against treating this literature as purely speculative in quality. Emphasising "rumors" as the crucial qualifier, Gannon warns against dismissing invasion narratives as "'fantasies' or 'myths' or 'fairytales'." Instead, as "hard science-fiction" that posited "serious challenges to contemporary understandings and expectations", such narratives were "more akin to

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<sup>139</sup> A. J. Echevarria II, *Imagining Future War: The West's Technological Revolution and Visions of Wars to Come, 1880-1914* (Westport CA: Praeger Security International, 2007), p. 2.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., xv.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., pp. 96-98.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., xv.

'rumors' of the future."<sup>144</sup> This sort of fiction was not crudely detached from technological development, but was heavily shaped by it, and in some cases even inspired advance itself. Highlighting the influence of *The War in the Air* on the Edwardian aviation lobby, and how Wells and Captain R. E. Vickers shaped E. D. Swinton's concept for the tank, Gannon presents such examples as illustrative of "the extensive interconnections that exist between the domains of popular discourse and political influence."<sup>145</sup> By approaching several key invasion texts through these parameters, Gannon defends the prophesying ability of this literature. In his analysis of *The Invasion of 1910*, though confirming its reputation as a propagandist tract in which "the force of economically-driven popular journalism...ran roughshod over, reasonable military speculation", Gannon suggests that Le Queux "arrives at a number of telling anticipations".<sup>146</sup> The most significant of these anticipations relates to Gannon's notion of the 'unreality' of the western front. Arguing the extensive entrenchment of the First World War was the product of conditions peculiar to "the Franco-German salient", the fluid military operations of *The Invasion of 1910*, in Gannon's view, compare more favourably with action in the Second World War. If one accepts this principle that the western front was "a single anomalous deviation from the evolution of warfare that both preceded and succeeded it", then Le Queux's portrayal of modern warfare, and indeed the similar portrayals of various invasion-scare authors, appear far more plausible.<sup>147</sup>

Whether fantastical 'failures in imagination' unconcerned with short-term military matters or informed and influential 'rumours of the future', this body of literature was heavily shaped by the conflict between technological advance and speculation. The narratives form one part of what Tami Biddle has called "a history of the tension between imagined possibilities and technical realities."<sup>148</sup> Her study *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*

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<sup>144</sup> C. E. Gannon, *Rumors of War and Infernal Machines: Technomilitary Agenda-Setting in American and British Speculative Fiction* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), p. 2.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., pp. 37 and 43.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>148</sup> T. D. Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare: The Evolution of British and American Ideas about Strategic Bombing, 1914-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 11.

considers this dynamic by tracking the development of aviation technology and aerial military strategy, arguing that the latter rarely operated effectively with the former. This was largely due to the unwavering commitment among advocates of aerial bombardment to the theory that urban conurbations would quickly collapse when subjected to sustained periods of bombing. This erroneous assumption was, Biddle argues, a product of Edwardian technological and military understandings, borne out of “a society adjusting to modernity – and full of the stresses of that adjustment”.<sup>149</sup> Long before the Edwardian achievement of heavier-than-air flight, flying machines had been envisioned as bombers, “agents of physical destruction...psychological shock and social disruption”.<sup>150</sup> Such ideas were compounded in fiction, notably through the destructive capability of George Griffith’s airships in *The Angel of the Revolution*, and the menace of German zeppelins in Sidney Mattingly’s *The Terror by Night*. Only Wells, as Biddle affirms, came close to correctly predicting the future of air war in *The War in the Air*, in which aerial bombardment proves highly damaging but inconclusive, a product of a world “in which technological developments have outstripped the political and moral means to contain them.”<sup>151</sup>

A more concerted survey of fictions of future aerial warfare is found in Michael Paris’s book *Winged Warfare: The Literature and Theory of Aerial Warfare in Britain, 1859-1917*. Proposing the existence of “a general climate of air-mindedness” in the decades approaching 1914, Paris here revisits the reflecting versus conditioning debate. Describing invasion and future-war fiction broadly as “prophetic writing which both reflected and influenced the society in which it was created”, Paris argues that aerial war narratives “exerted considerable influence on the pre-1914 mind”, as the use of flying machines as a weapon of war became “established in the public imagination as a future certainty, and thus suggested eventual possibilities for pioneer aviators.”<sup>152</sup> By this reasoning such fiction was

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>152</sup> M. Paris, *Winged Warfare: The Literature and Theory of Aerial Warfare in Britain, 1859-1917* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), p. 16.



actively contributing to technological advance by creating a mindset in which advance could be conceived, rather than simply reflecting contemporary ideas about flight. Yet equally, Paris asserts that visions of aerial warfare were rarely entirely isolated imaginings, as they often responded to “some major step in man’s conquest of the air, which acted as a catalyst upon the imagination.”<sup>153</sup> *Winged Warfare* thus further emphasises the cyclical nature of invasion and future-war fiction, a body of literature that was both responsive and reinforcing, parroting ideas and sentiments it had, as a genre, itself shaped.<sup>154</sup> This analysis also contributes significantly to the ‘catalogue’ of invasion and future-war literature, largely through its inclusion of “those novels aimed at young adults...[and] the stories and serials which appeared in the boys’ papers”.<sup>155</sup> A field somewhat neglected by Clarke, Paris expands the boundaries of invasion literature by incorporating such authors as F. S. Brereton, Herbert Strang, and A. W. Kipling into the genre, asserting that “tales of future wars were almost as frequent in the juveniles as the public school and wild west adventures.”<sup>156</sup>

It is important to note that invasion literature engaged with military themes both directly and indirectly. Far from confined to ‘direct’ matters of technology and strategic development, this literature was equally significant in terms of cultural militarism. As Paris argues in his later study *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture*, many authors of popular fiction cast themselves in a social Darwinist role, hoping to mould and prepare their readers “to play their part in the coming struggle.”<sup>157</sup> This notion of perpetual preparation for war was particularly apparent in juvenile literature. The Victorian and Edwardian youth were immersed, Paris asserts, in a culture that romanticised war, elevated

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>154</sup> One illustrative example of this relationship concerns *The War in the Air* by H. G. Wells. It seems significant, in Paris’s view, that the novel was published at the same time as the establishment of a Committee of Imperial Defence subcommittee under Lord Esher, formed to investigate “the dangers to which we would be exposed at sea or on land by any developments in aerial navigation reasonably probable in the near future”, p. 38.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>157</sup> M. Paris, *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850-2000* (London: Reaktion, 2000), p. 87.

soldiers to hero status, and promoted the martial spirit.<sup>158</sup> Nowhere was this masculinised dynamic more obvious than in the pages of boys' fiction of future-war and invasion. With highly charged titles such as 'A Fight for Empire', 'Peril to Come', and 'When the Lion Awoke', this sub-genre targeted a young and impressionable readership with militaristic, imperialist sentiments. Often peopled by youthful protagonists, "plucky lads [that] always know where their duty lies and will do whatever is necessary in the hour of danger", these typical heroes highlight the role such literature played in disseminating masculine imperial ideals and identities.<sup>159</sup>

The martial ideas that Paris associates with Edwardian juvenile literature are also considered by C. D. Eby in his book *The Road to Armageddon*. Focusing on 'popular literature', which he defines as "those works which circulated among the population almost as freely as common coin", such fiction is assumed to be a far better reflection of contemporary socio-political trends than the 'great books' of the era. Steeped in "militant nationalism", Eby argues that popular literature prepared the ground for war in Europe, a conflict that arrived in 1914 "like an ancient prophecy at last fulfilled."<sup>160</sup> Eby defends this deterministic analysis through a flexible interpretation of popular literature, allowing his focus to flit from public school adventure stories to the early scouting manuals of Baden-Powell, considering such favourites along the way as Peter Pan, the gentleman thief Raffles, and Sherlock Holmes. Beginning the study with a broad survey of late-Victorian and Edwardian "paper invasions", Eby highlights several martial tropes that appear with significant regularity such as decadence, degeneration, and militarised national rebirth.<sup>161</sup> These ideas are shown to have interlinked with broader concepts of celebrated British amateurism, the growing popularity of sports and related ethics of fair play, and the pastoral romanticism of such poets as Rupert Brooke. Eby also pays tribute to the astonishing longevity of invasion

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>160</sup> Eby, *The Road to Armageddon*, p. 9.

<sup>161</sup> One illustrative example of this notion of "regeneration" Eby provides is Carruthers, the sheltered civil servant of *The Riddle of the Sands* (London: Penguin, 1995). Transformed by his experience of yachting and amateur espionage, Carruthers morphs from a "lounge lizard...into a stalwart man of action", Ibid. p. 31.

fiction, a genre that had suffered “four decades of hard use by hack writers” who had “wrung nearly every conceivable plot out of it”.<sup>162</sup> Crucial to his argument, however, is the interconnected nature of pre-war popular literature under the thematic umbrella of the martial spirit. Invasion literature in this sense was one element of a wider literary appeal for vigilance and preparation, in both cultural and military terms.

This body of literature, then, has often been analysed in terms of its popular influence, on the technological and strategic development of modern warfare, on imperial sentiment and cultural militarism, and so on. It is therefore important to recognise that for all its thematic complexity, such fiction was largely defined against, and itself influenced by, specific external enemies. In the case of Edwardian narratives this enemy was almost exclusively Germany. Several recent studies have focused on invasion literature through the prism of Anglo-German diplomatic and cultural relations. Iain Boyd Whyte’s contribution to *The First World War as a Clash of Cultures*, ‘Anglo-German Conflict in Popular Fiction, 1870-1914’ examines how both British and German popular fiction in the years approaching 1914 developed and reinforced national stereotypes. By manufacturing a cultural conflict between the two nations, such literature prepared the ground for the mass acceptance of respective war aims and justifications come 1914, be it protecting civilisation and liberalism from German militarism, or dismantling rampant British materialism.<sup>163</sup> This was, of course, a gradual process. As Whyte highlights, the glowing tribute to Kaiser Wilhelm offered by the protagonist Davies in *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903) presents Anglo-German rivalry as “healthy and inevitable”, and German naval ascendancy “a challenge rather than a threat.”<sup>164</sup> Yet by 1914 such sentiments had been replaced by the crass jingoism typical of the Harmsworth press, in which Germany is reactionary, militarist, and craving expansion at the expense of British interests. Whyte additionally considers a range of German future-war narratives, with titles including *Der Zusammenbruch der alten Welt* and *Der Deutsch-*

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid., p75.

<sup>163</sup> I. B. Whyte, ‘Anglo-German Conflict in Popular Fiction, 1870-1914’, in F. Bridgham, ed, *The First World War as a Clash of Cultures* (Rochester NY: Camden House, 2006), pp. 43-52.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

*englische Krieg*, arguing that they helped foster an image of the arrogant, mercantilist Briton, seized upon by official German propaganda upon the outbreak of war.<sup>165</sup> Taking British and German examples as a single collection of narratives, Whyte suggests such literature imagines “a conflict of two avowedly incompatible systems”, and thus “encouraged the war psychosis on both sides.”<sup>166</sup>

Some of the most recent research has, however, countered Whyte’s idea of mutually reinforced antagonism. In *British Images of Germany: Admiration, Antagonism and Ambivalence* by Richard Scully, the cultural relationship between Britain and Germany is presented as complex and multi-layered. Arguing against the idea that Edwardian Britain was gripped by a universal Germanophobia, the work proposes that images of Germany in pre-1914 Britain ranged from veneration through to antipathy. Employing Paul Kennedy’s classification of ‘idealist’ and ‘realist’ approaches, Scully emphasises that the representation of Germany in British invasion narratives is far from uniform. Early Edwardian works, such as *The Riddle of the Sands*, regularly portray Germany in a positive light, as a reputable foe rather than a reprehensible enemy. In turn, various invasion narratives, including *The Death Trap* (1907) by Robert Cole and Walter Wood’s *The Enemy in our Midst* (1906), distinguish between the German people, who are essentially decent, and the totalitarian, warmongering German government.<sup>167</sup> Scully also echoes Matin in stressing the importance of examining “the ‘popular’ and ‘literary’ fiction of this period in tandem”.<sup>168</sup> Focusing on *Howards End* by E. M. Forster, the novel is presented as a considered and in-depth challenge to “the idea of Imperial Germany as a potential model for Britain”.<sup>169</sup> Yet importantly, as Scully illustrates, Forster’s work explores two Germanies, one of “the aggressive German, so dear to the English journalist”, the other of the “countryman of Hegel and Kant...whose Imperialism was

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., pp. 92-3

<sup>167</sup> R. Scully, *British Images of Germany: Admiration, Antagonism and Ambivalence* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), pp. 111-114. For classifications see P. M. Kennedy, ‘Idealists and Realists: British Views of Germany, 1864-1939’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 25 (1975), pp. 137-156.

<sup>168</sup> Scully, *British Images of Germany*, p. 87.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

the Imperialism of the air".<sup>170</sup> Edwardian invasion literature, by this reading, was not a straightforward manifestation of Germanophobia. The best way of illustrating this, as Scully's research suggests, is to consider invasion narratives (and other 'popular' literature) alongside 'literary' treatments of Anglo-German relations.

Another good example of this analytical approach is Petra Rau's *English Modernism, National Identity and the Germans, 1890-1950*, in which she explores Germany as a literary trope in English literature. Rau highlights the tension between "modernity and national identity" in the Edwardian understanding of 'Englishness', and argues that 'Germany' served as an important conduit, channelling anxiety "onto an 'other' through which imponderables can be more easily articulated."<sup>171</sup> In an echo of Clarke, Rau justifies her inclusion of 'popular literature' such as Saki and Le Queux, as it "often provides a valuable barometer for contemporary anxieties that High modernism doesn't tackle in the same way."<sup>172</sup> Many narratives of Anglo-German conflict, though struggling to exactly define Englishness, or indeed Britishness, "articulate unequivocally how Germanness differs from it."<sup>173</sup> Rau provides a series of binaries - such as tradition and modernity, liberalism and reaction, volunteerism and militarism - that characterise literary representations of the Anglo-German relationship. Such binaries, Rau argues, were often highly inappropriate qualifiers. The debate over compulsory military service played out in such fiction offers a good example. While rejecting the anathema of German militarism out of hand, many authors propose schemes of social and military reorganisation "that seems to turn Great Britain into Little Prussia."<sup>174</sup> The root of such contradictions, argues Rau, is that the German aggressor was rarely the only enemy in the minds of the authorship. Describing invasion fiction as "the most symptomatic narrative of national decline", the typical enemy was "often not the modern foreign invader but the legacy of empire and affluence that manifests itself in

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<sup>170</sup> E. M. Forster, *Howards End*, in Scully, *British Images of Germany*, pp. 121-122.

<sup>171</sup> P. Rau, *English Modernism, National Identity and the Germans, 1890-1950* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p. 1.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

degeneration and complacency.” Rau here identifies an interesting paradox. Despite defining English identity against the Germans, invasion literature imagined German invasion in a highly introspective, insular manner.<sup>175</sup>

The historiography of British invasion literature, then, is largely defined by consensus. Rescued as a genre from obscurity by I. F. Clarke, the research that has followed *Voices Prophesying War* has expanded his analytical approach rather than opposed his basic premises. Matin’s reassessment of the genre’s relationship with ‘literary’ fiction, a process to which several other researchers have subsequently contributed, represents a significant advance in contextual understanding. Similarly, the military or technological focus of historians such as Gannon, Biddle, and Echevarria provides greater operational and strategic insight on Clarke’s idea of an authorial ‘failure in imagination’. An implicit debate does exist within this historiography (which will be considered in greater detail below) concerning the principles of popular reception and the almost unquantifiable relationship between representation and conditioning. While Clarke saw invasion narratives as exerting influence on declining Anglo-German relations, others such as Moon have interpreted the fiction as a symptom, not a cause, of international antagonism. Though rather an unsatisfying conclusion, the cyclical model proposed by Paris seems the most appropriate. Yet the analyses considered above clearly concur more than they clash. Almost all of the studies, for example, suggest that invasion and future-war fiction played a role in culturally and militarily preparing the nation for war, creating a climate that made European conflict appear inevitable, and in some circumstances, desirable. Moreover, this historiography also reflects the broad thematic focus of the genre’s authorship. Ranging from xenophobic impulses and fears of espionage through to issues of national identity and martial ability, this body of literature was not shackled by its primary focus; speculating on the nature of modern warfare.

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

The genre's representation of domestic political upheaval, however, is an area that this historiography has not explored in great detail. This gap is surprising, particularly given the regularity with which such themes appear in British invasion literature. It seems clear that the testing domestic political climate of Edwardian Britain (explored in section 1.2) had an important effect on contemporary invasion narratives. The aim of this thesis is to explore this relationship in greater depth, assessing how significant an influence internal political issues had on the production of Edwardian invasion literature. By outlining the project's approach and methodology, the final section of this chapter will explain how this aim is to be achieved. It will discuss the nature of this project's sample of Edwardian invasion narratives, its size and shape, its timeframe, how it was compiled, and how the works will be analysed. The three major arguments of the thesis will also be highlighted and explained. These are, in brief: the need for an analytical shift from 'external' to 'internal' themes; a reassessment of the ideological or political origins of this literature; and lastly, the importance of stressing the continuing analytical value of the 'Edwardian Crisis'. This section will also consider various problems that emerged during the research process, such as the ill-defined nature of 'anxiety' as a term of historical analysis, and the constraints and potential pitfalls of working with fictional sources.

#### **1.4 - Approach and Methodology**

Domestic political themes, it should be stressed, have not been completely ignored by previous research into British invasion literature. Several key studies have identified the regularity with which images of internal upheaval are included in such narratives.<sup>176</sup> Many historians and literary critics have, in turn, recognised the insular dimensions of this literature, particularly regarding ideas of the martial spirit, fears of degeneration, and various other broad examples explored above. Yet the representation of domestic politics in

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<sup>176</sup> These studies include Matin, 'Securing Britain', pp. 49-52, Stafford, *The Silent Game*, pp. 45-46, Scully, *British Images of Germany*, p. 116-117, and Moon, 'The Invasion of the United Kingdom'.

invasion literature still requires a greater level of understanding. Arguably, such narratives have never been adequately contextualised in the domestic socio-political history of Edwardian Britain. This is largely because the threat of external invasion has traditionally been treated as the *raison d'être* of this literature. Though perhaps a natural assumption, it is an inappropriate way of approaching a thematically complex body of work. Themes of invasion and future-war undoubtedly form a primary element of invasion narratives, but they should not be considered the only element of analytical importance. By foregrounding the representation of domestic political upheaval in Edwardian invasion literature, this thesis will aim to redress this balance.

This research project has involved analysing eighty-four invasion narratives published during the extended Edwardian period.<sup>177</sup> Such a straightforward mission statement, however, requires some brief caveats. Firstly, as highlighted by the discussion of invasion and future-war fiction above, pre-1914 invasion literature is a porous, ill-defined genre. As such, some of the works considered are not strictly or solely 'invasion-narratives', but form part of a broad Edwardian literature influenced by invasion themes.<sup>178</sup> The narratives also vary significantly in form, from journalistic tracts and short stories through to novels and large works serialised in newspapers. These differences in style and form do not undermine approaching this body of literature as a unified whole, but they do have an important bearing on the analytical approach, in terms of why narratives are written, who they are aimed at, and how they are received. Secondly, the extended Edwardian period in question begins and ends in confrontation, running from the start of the South African War in

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<sup>177</sup> This thesis favours the term 'narrative' when referring to examples of invasion literature. Other studies have tended to utilise a range of interchangeable terms, including 'tale', 'story', 'novel', and 'text'. The flexible term 'narrative' is used by this project to emphasise the varied nature and format of this source material, highlighting in particular that not all examples of Edwardian invasion literature are works of fiction.

<sup>178</sup> Such narratives form an important context for Edwardian invasion literature. While they may not portray an external military threat, they utilise many of the tropes common to the fiction in its narrowest sense. Moreover, these examples often emerge from specific internal political problems, uniting invasion themes with domestic political upheaval. Notable examples include C. Kernahan, *The Dumpling: a Detective Love Story of a Great Labour Rising* (New York: B. W. Dodge and Co., 1907), where the eponymous labour leader the 'Dumpling' is Napoleon reincarnate, and W. D. Newton, *The North Afire* (London: Methuen and Co., 1914), which imagines British military operations in Ulster.



1899 through to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. This timeframe recognises the important influence of the South African War on British political and cultural attitudes. Undermining Britain's colonial strategy, its military strength, and imperial confidence more broadly, David Brooks has identified the conflict's role in the development of "a neurosis about national decline which has never quite gone away."<sup>179</sup> At the opposite end of the timeframe, 1914 represents the moment at which the context of such literature irrecoverably shifted. Though it did not necessarily represent a cultural or socio-political watershed, as has often been assumed, it did render the practice of prophesying future war somewhat obsolete.

The process of compiling source material for this project has relied heavily on I. F. Clarke's bibliographical work *The Tale of the Future*. The third edition of Clarke's work lists over 500 'tales of the future' published globally between 1871 and 1914. Of these, 166 are identified as works of invasion or future-war literature. Refining this further still, Clarke's reference guide includes over sixty British invasion narratives published during the extended Edwardian period. This list is naturally not exhaustive, for completion in a bibliographical sense, as Clarke recognises, "is a moving target".<sup>180</sup> Several other studies have proved helpful in gaining a fuller picture of the Edwardian output of invasion literature, including *Winged Warfare* by Michael Paris, *Before Armageddon* by Michael Moorcock, and Everett Bleiler's edited catalogue *Science Fiction: the Early Years*. Reflecting the ideas of A. Michael Matin and Richard Scully discussed above, this project additionally considers the work of several canonical authors, such as Joseph Conrad and Rudyard Kipling. Though concentrating on Edwardian narratives, the thesis also analyses numerous influential late-Victorian examples, notably *The Battle of Dorking* (1871) and *The Great War in England* (1894). The eighty-four narratives that form the core of this analysis, then, represent a comprehensive survey of pre-1914 British invasion literature.

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<sup>179</sup> Brooks, *The Age of Upheaval*, p. 5.

<sup>180</sup> Clarke, *Tale of the Future*, xii.

The 1899 to 1914 timeframe encompasses several spikes in popular invasion fears, most notably in 1906 and between 1908 and 1909. Here we see a measure of vindication for Clarke's principle of invasion literature as a 'mirror image' of international relations. While publications increased in the wake of the ongoing Tangier Crisis in 1906, 1908 and 1909 saw "invasion conjectures in the British press...[reach] epidemic proportions", heavily influenced by the increasing belligerence of the Anglo-German naval race.<sup>181</sup> Furthermore, this timeframe equally illustrates an important shift in fictional antagonists. A very clear shift occurs (as discussed above) in the late-nineteenth century, where the threat of France, or a Franco-Russian alliance, gives way to the ascendant threat of Germany.<sup>182</sup> By 1907, in parallel with the informal establishment of the Triple Entente, France had ceased entirely to be portrayed as a likely invader, while in contrast, fictional German invasions reached their pre-war high. The chosen timeframe of 1899 to 1914, then, suitably reflects these important political and literary trends.

This shift in fictional enemies can also be highlighted by exploring the rise and fall of specific invasion anxieties. One illustrative example is the military threat associated with Sir Edward Watkin's proposals for the construction of a channel tunnel. Though exploratory engineering work began in 1881, the project was abandoned the following year in controversy after public and political outcry. The fear was, as a high-profile petition explained, that "such a Railroad would involve this country in military dangers and liabilities from which, as an island, it has hitherto been happily free".<sup>183</sup> Opposition was also expressed in a flurry of anti-tunnel invasion narratives, with titles including *How John Bull Lost London*, *The Seizure of the Channel Tunnel* (both 1882) and *The Taking of Dover* (1888). These fears also influenced several Edwardian examples of invasion literature, such

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<sup>181</sup> Moon, 'The Invasion of the United Kingdom', p. 379.

<sup>182</sup> Victorian fears of French invasion are covered extensively by Clarke in *Voices Prophesying War*. For images of Russian invasion in British popular fiction see K. Neilson, 'Tsar and Commissars: W. Somerset Maugham, *Ashenden* and Images of Russia in British Adventure Fiction, 1890-1930, *Canadian Journal of History*, 27.3 (1992), pp. 475-500.

<sup>183</sup> 'The Proposed Channel Tunnel', *Nineteenth Century*, 11.62 (1882), p. 493. See also Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War*, pp. 95-98.

as *London's Peril* (1900) by F. M. Allen. Based on a French conspiracy to seize London in an unannounced military raid, the plot hinges on a secretly constructed tunnel, "from Gris-Nez or its neighbourhood to Hamstead".<sup>184</sup> Similarly, Max Pemberton's novel *Pro Patria* (1901) imagines a tunnel connecting Calais to the Kentish countryside, a "road of steel...thrust out beneath the Channel-bed until it should touch the gardens of England".<sup>185</sup> Yet as narratives depicting French invasion decreased in number, so did authorial visions of diabolical channel tunnel schemes. Walter Wood's short story 'The Tunnel Terror' (1907), the last 'tunnel narrative' explored by this project, is indicative of this trend. Describing an improbable and ill-explained German invasion plot, whereby German spies seize both ends of a newly-built tunnel between Calais and Dover, the work arguably highlights the growing political irrelevance of channel tunnel anxieties in an age of Anglo-French cooperation.<sup>186</sup>

This project focuses on the production rather than the popular reception of invasion literature. This is not intended, however, to undermine or question the historical importance of the common Edwardian reader.<sup>187</sup> Nor is it a defeatist recognition that popular attitudes to invasion literature are impossible to gauge. Though presenting significant challenges, the great mass of readers are no longer, in the words of one pessimist, "beyond the range of historical research".<sup>188</sup> Studies such as *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* by Jonathan Rose have demonstrated ways that the experience of the common reader can be assessed.<sup>189</sup> The source material for analysing reading patterns in Edwardian Britain, moreover, is extremely rich. Thousands of Edwardians from across the class spectrum recorded their reading habits in diaries, memoirs, and autobiographies.<sup>190</sup> Many of these individuals, including Sam Sutcliffe and Esme Wingfield-Stratford, refer to reading invasion

<sup>184</sup> F. M. Allen, pseud., *London's Peril* (London: Downey and Co., 1900), p. 85.

<sup>185</sup> M. Pemberton, *Pro Patria* (London: Ward, Lock and Co., 1901), p. 238.

<sup>186</sup> W. Wood, 'The Tunnel Terror', *Pearson's Magazine*, 23.3 (1907), pp. 269-276.

<sup>187</sup> 'Common' here aims to distinguish non-professional from professional readers, i.e. book reviewers.

<sup>188</sup> R. Darnton, *The Kiss of Lamourette* (London: Faber, 1990), p. 177.

<sup>189</sup> J. Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001).

<sup>190</sup> See W. Matthews, *British Autobiographies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1955), and J. Burnett, D. Vincent, and D. Mayall, eds., *The Autobiography of the Working Class: An Annotated, Critical Bibliography* (3 vols., Brighton: Harvester, 1984).

narratives.<sup>191</sup> Repositories of oral accounts from the Edwardian period, particularly those conducted as part of Paul Thompson's pioneering social history research, provide another potentially fruitful resource.<sup>192</sup> Such material could be used to corroborate (or else challenge) the assumptions of invasion literature reception - that the genre encouraged anti-German sentiment and an inevitable sense of approaching war among its readers.

Yet the goals of this thesis involve engaging with invasion literature at an earlier stage of its life-cycle. This project aims to establish the influence of domestic political upheaval on the writing of invasion narratives. The primary focus of this analysis, as such, is on authors rather than their audiences. Though this might be criticised as an approach typical of top-down intellectual history, such research represents a crucial step in furthering our understanding of the Edwardian fear of invasion. In arguing that Edwardian invasion scares were complex phenomena rooted as much in domestic political anxieties as external military threats, and harnessing contemporary invasion fiction to consider this premise, this project must analyse works as they came into being. It aims to establish links between the lives of contributing authors and the representation of domestic political unrest in their works, highlighting how individual writers were influenced by their experience of the Edwardian political climate.

Such an approach naturally raises questions regarding the analytical value of 'authorial intent'. This concept has formed the subject of significant debate - particularly in literary criticism and communication studies - over the nature of meaning; whether it is an inherent part of constructing a text, or created by readers through the act of reading. For advocates of the latter position, texts can only provide meaning through their total independence from historiographical constructs. "To give the text an Author", argued the

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<sup>191</sup> See Introduction, pp. 8-9.

<sup>192</sup> Thompson's study *The Edwardians: The Remaking of British Society* was based on close to 500 interviews he conducted in the early 1970s. The original recordings of these interviews were deposited in the British Library National Sound Archive, while the interview transcripts form part of the National Social Policy and Social Change Archive at the University of Essex. Another valuable oral resource for this period is the Imperial War Museum Sound Archive, which holds over 9000 hours of material relating to the First World War, largely from interviews conducted during the 1970s and 1980s.

literary theorist Roland Barthes, “is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified”. Not only does such an approach stifle the process of individual interpretation, it leaves the study of literature and literary history “tyrannically centred on the author, his person, his history, his tastes”.<sup>193</sup> Michel Foucault similarly criticised this “valorisation” of the author, and argued against analysis that focuses on “the exalted emotions related to the act of composition”.<sup>194</sup> The process of a narrative’s production, by this reasoning, should have no bearing on its value as a text.

While such concepts have had a major influence across the humanities, they form part of what Rose describes as “a long and increasingly sterile” debate.<sup>195</sup> Opponents of this sort of extreme relativism maintain “that objective historical knowledge is both desirable and attainable”. In terms of ‘the author’, moreover, such theories have often been criticised as highly inconsistent. Staunch deconstructionists, as Richard Evans has highlighted, often indirectly valorise themselves as authors. Despite promoting “the infinite possibilities of textual interpretation”, postmodernist writers have been seen to hold strong views on how their own works (or the works of other writers) should be interpreted.<sup>196</sup> Recognising the positive influence of postmodernism on the historical profession, Evans defends the empirical root of History, arguing that with appropriate source material and methodology, historians can “approach a reconstruction of past reality that may be partial and provisional...but is nevertheless true”.<sup>197</sup> This principle is important for this project in terms of the relationship between Edwardian invasion literature and its authors. With the right evidence and methodological approach, ‘the author’ can form a legitimate focus of historical analysis. As Ryan Clark has forcefully argued, the inherently subjective role of ‘the author’ should not form an excuse for abandoning the concept of intentionality:

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<sup>193</sup> R. Barthes, ‘The Death of the Author’, *Image, Music, Text* (London: Fontana Press, 1977), pp. 147 and 143.

<sup>194</sup> M. Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1977), p. 116.

<sup>195</sup> Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, p. 7.

<sup>196</sup> An illustrative example of this is the 1980s controversy surrounding Paul de Man. See R. J. Evans, *In Defence of History* (London: Granta, 1997), pp. 233-243.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 249.

Criticism involves critical labour; the job of the critic is not to leave a text exactly as she found it or to offer a mere précis but to add/reveal/subvert aspects of it...evidence of the author's actual intentions (including extra-textual evidence) may be used as a valuable critical resource.<sup>198</sup>

In foregrounding the concept of authorial intent, however, this project will not analyse the 'meaning' of invasion narratives at length. The thesis will not focus solely on ascertaining how authors intended readers to interpret their texts, nor will it dwell on subtext, symbolism, and other literary devices. Instead, the analysis is centred on the author at the point of production, assessing how domestic political forces can be said to have influenced the writing of invasion narratives. This is, of course, an imperfect process. An author might choose to write an invasion or future-war narrative for innumerable conscious reasons, as a propagandist tract or political rallying cry, through a genuine sense of concern for Britain's socio-political future, or for monetary reasons alone, recognising the popularity of the invasion-scare theme.<sup>199</sup> In turn, such writers might be influenced by a wide range of less conscious, even subconscious factors, such as xenophobia, Germanophobia, class prejudice, or simply an ill-defined sense of anxiety and foreboding. Unfortunately, such factors are by their nature unquantifiable. Yet historians can engage in informed speculation, giving reasoned assessments of how authors were influenced by domestic political upheaval. The following chapters will identify representations of domestic political upheaval in the texts, and cross-reference them with authorial biography and critical reception. Chasing an infallible sense of authorial motivation is clearly a forlorn hope. But

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<sup>198</sup> R. K. Clark, 'Reading for Intent: Why Authors Matter in Criticism', unpublished PhD thesis (University of Memphis, 2007), pp. 19-20.

<sup>199</sup> William Le Queux's fiction, in particular, has often been identified as the product of monetary opportunism. In *The Real Le Queux* (London: Nicholson and Watson, 1938), Norman Sladen suggests that Le Queux's many novels were "solely a means to an end", adding that they enabled him "to defray, *inter alia*, the heavy expenses of his Secret Service activities", vii. This is partially backed-up by the lengthy correspondence between Le Queux and Douglas Sladen. Referring in one letter to the serialised novel *Devil's Dice* (1896), Le Queux asserts the following, "serials never make a decent book, but the temptation alas! proves too great when one is offered a decent monthly", W. Le Queux to D. Sladen, 31<sup>st</sup> October 1896, Douglas Sladen papers, Richmond upon Thames Local Studies Library, SLA/3.

by tracking consistent literary themes and representations, forming strong biographical portraits of authors, and rooting both in a sound historical context, it is possible to draw relatively informed conclusions on what forces motivated and influenced the invasion literature authorship.

The strength of these biographical portraits naturally varies from author to author. In the case of prominent writers such as William Le Queux, H. G. Wells, and Rudyard Kipling, useful information is readily available through biographies, autobiographies, and critical studies. A limited selection of personal papers and correspondence has also been consulted, including those of Guy du Maurier, B. S. Townroe, and Allen Upward. Yet many of the authors of Edwardian invasion literature were obscure, pseudonymous, or entirely anonymous. For these less well-known writers a wide variety of biographic and reference material has been harnessed, including literary reference works, biographical catalogues, and online databases.<sup>200</sup> Through a combination of such sources it has been possible to construct a biographic sketch, however brief, of almost every contributor. Assessing the critical reception of these narratives, in turn, has largely involved locating contemporary book reviews. These appeared in a wide range of Edwardian newspapers, journals and periodicals, varying in length and enthusiasm. As with authorial biography, there are significant discrepancies in terms of media interest. While popular examples including *An Englishman's Home* and *The Riddle of the Sands* earned major press attention, lesser-known publications such as *London's Peril* and *The Tyranny* were not reviewed in any capacity. Nonetheless, these represent two of a small group, as the majority of examples received a degree of critical reception.

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<sup>200</sup> Of particular importance have been the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, <http://www.oxforddnb.com>, *Who Was Who 2014* (London: A & C Black, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing plc, 2014), online ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press), [www.ukwhoswho.com](http://www.ukwhoswho.com), E. F. Bleiler, *Science-Fiction: The Early Years* (Kent OH: Kent State University Press, 1990), S. Kemp, C. Mitchell and D. Trotter, eds, *Edwardian Fiction: An Oxford Companion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, (London: Gollancz, 2014), online ed., eds J. Clute, D. Langford, P. Nicholls and G. Sleight, <http://sf-encyclopedia.co.uk/>, Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War*.

A further way in which these narratives will be considered is through their use of visual images. The Edwardian period was something of a golden age for book illustration. As the major publishing houses began to produce, in Simon Houfe's words, an increasing number of "grand gift-books, glorious travel books and elaborate children's books", contemporary illustrators, including the household names Arthur Rackham and Edmund Dulac, presided over a shift from "stout drawing in black and white to luscious effects and bright colouring".<sup>201</sup> It is interesting to note that Edwardian invasion literature generally does not reflect this trend. In the first place, many of the narratives are not illustrated. Of the eighty-four works that make up this project's narrative sample, only twenty include visual images. It can be said with relatively certainty, therefore, that no more than one quarter of Edwardian invasion narratives had accompanying illustrations.<sup>202</sup> This trend can be attributed in part to publishing variations. Many invasion narratives were published by comparatively minor organisations that had neither the funds nor the wherewithal to include illustrations. Those works that are illustrated are usually the product of larger publishers, such as MacMillan and Tower. A link also exists between illustrated titles and serialisation. Examples of this include *The Angel of the Revolution* by George Griffith, initially serialised by *Pearson's Weekly* (1893), and *The Invasion of 1910* by William Le Queux, first serialised in Alfred Harmsworth's *Daily Mail* (1906).<sup>203</sup> The vast majority of these images, in turn, appear in black and white or sepia tones rather than the bright colours and luscious detail described

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<sup>201</sup> S. Houfe, *The Dictionary of British Book Illustrations and Caricaturists, 1800-1914* (Woodbridge: Baron Publishing, 1978), p. 209. See also B. Peppin and L. Micklethwait, *Dictionary of British Book Illustrators, The Twentieth Century* (London: John Murray, 1983), and M. C. Salaman, *British Book Illustration Yesterday and Today* (Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1974).

<sup>202</sup> This calculation is imperfect for several reasons. Firstly, the eighty-four works consulted by this project do not represent the total Edwardian output of invasion literature, meaning that any quantitative figures are provisional. Secondly, variations often exist across different editions of the same work. *The War in the Air* offers a case in point. Originally serialised in the *Pall Mall Gazette* without illustrations (1908), the novel went through multiple editions, some of which were illustrated. These include the first US edition (New York: MacMillan, 1908) illustrated by Eric Pape, and a 1914 edition (London: Nelson) illustrated by A. C. Michael.

<sup>203</sup> Le Queux's earlier illustrated work *The Great War in England in 1897* was also serialised by the Harmsworth press, first appearing in the popular magazine *Answers* (1893).



by Houfe. The illustrations of Edwardian invasion literature, as such, are decidedly un-Edwardian.<sup>204</sup>

These images can be divided into three broad groups: maps and diagrams, scenes of military or naval action, and illustrated representations of domestic political issues.<sup>205</sup> Adding a visual verisimilitude to invasion narratives, various authors include maps that detail the areas in which battles are fought, or diagrams of troop distribution and movement. One such example is *The Great War in England* by Le Queux (1894), which contains a great number of rudimentary maps, detailing where the French and Russian enemy initially land, mapping out important river estuaries such as the Humber, and highlighting the battle lines surrounding key cities such as Manchester.<sup>206</sup> The second category of images is significantly more diverse, ranging from symbolic images of enemy soldiers on British soil through to scenes of naval (and sometimes aerial) battles. More varied still is the third category, illustrations that relate to domestic political upheaval. These include images of riots and revolutionary violence, of Irish military reinforcements, of urban squalor and the rural idyll, and of foreign espionage. Though examples from all three of these groups will be explored in this thesis (and where possible, reproduced), it is the third category that will receive particular attention. Such images provide valuable insight on how authors intended their texts to be interpreted, reinforcing the important influence of domestic political issues on the production of Edwardian invasion literature.

Through the approach outlined above, this thesis aims to achieve three major goals. The first of these goals is to propose an analytical shift in the study of invasion narratives, away from the 'external' threat of foreign attack towards 'internal' anxieties over social and

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<sup>204</sup> The notable exception to this rule is A. J. Dawson's *The Message* (1907), a novel with four colour images drawn the renowned artist and illustrator H. M. Brock.

<sup>205</sup> The phrase 'visual images' is used to reflect this variety, helping to distinguish between typical book illustrations and the more unusual use of maps and diagrams.

<sup>206</sup> W. Le Queux, *The Great War in England in 1897* (London: Tower Publishing Co., 1894), pp. 68, 105, 113, 146, 197, 237, 257, 273, 318. Another work that famously made use of maps is the *Riddle of the Sands* (1903) by Erskine Childers. The author's in-depth knowledge of the Baltic coastline saw him include detailed maps and charts of the waters surrounding the German Frisian Islands. See *Riddle of the Sands*, pp. 6-10.

political unrest. The sources identified above will not be approached simply as warnings of possible invasion, or as one-dimensional speculations on the future of modern warfare. Instead, such literature will be treated as inherently complex and multi-faceted. The theme of invasion will be approached as a literary device or vehicle, consciously harnessed by authors in order to promote a wide variety of grievances. By assessing these texts in this manner, invasion literature appears less a branch of speculative fiction than it does a forum of Edwardian social and political commentary. In this sense Clarke's 'mirror image' principle needs to be significantly amended. Such literature does not only reflect the peaks and troughs of international diplomacy, it equally acts as a domestic political barometer. The authors of invasion literature, then, were arguably influenced as much by internal upheaval as they were responding to external threats.<sup>207</sup> Focusing on the representation within the literature of key Edwardian domestic political concerns, including the campaigns for Irish Home Rule and female suffrage, calls for compulsory military service, increasing levels of industrial unrest, and social Darwinist fears of physical degeneration, it will be argued that such narratives promote far more than the threat of foreign invasion.

The thesis also questions the understanding that Edwardian invasion literature was a Tory product. In *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*, Hynes describes the Edwardian invasion scare as "primarily a Tory creation", and suggests that "most of the literary treatments of the theme carry obvious Tory political sentiments".<sup>208</sup> Echoing such ideas in more explicit terms, A. Michael Matin considers pre-1914 invasion narratives to have been "all but exclusively products of Conservative political interest".<sup>209</sup> While these arguments are not necessarily incorrect, they offer a misleadingly neat picture of contemporary Conservatism. Rather than ideologically unified, the Edwardian Tory party was shaped by significant political schisms.

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<sup>207</sup> This observation is borne out in part by book titles alone. While A. C. Fox Davies's *The Sex Triumphant* (1909), in Clarke, ed, *British Future Fiction, Vol. 5: Woman Triumphant*, responded to the growing debate over female suffrage, the pro-unionist *Under Home Rule* (London: Baines and Scarsbrook, 1912) by William Palmer was published as the drive for Irish Home Rule once again increased, with opposition represented in that year by the signing of the Ulster Covenant.

<sup>208</sup> Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*, p. 43.

<sup>209</sup> Matin, 'Securing Britain', v.

These splits were characteristic, argues J. R. Jones, of the unusual nature of the British political spectrum. Unlike comparative movements in Europe, the 'Right' in Britain consisted largely of groups "within the Tory party", rather than minority movements outside of the party fold. The self-appointed task of these caucuses, Jones continues, was to ensure that the party continued to defend institutions and practice principles it had "inherited from the past", often those which its leaders "tended to neglect or evade".<sup>210</sup> Driven by prominent figures, such as the Liberal Imperialists Joseph Chamberlain and Alfred Milner, and the Tory peers Lords Willoughby de Broke and Hugh Cecil, the 'Right' was associated with a variety of single-issue campaigns, including those for compulsory military service and tariff reform. It was also closely linked with a series of political controversies, notably those over the Parliament Act and the related crisis surrounding the Third Home Rule Bill. The link between invasion literature and the Tory party, this thesis will argue, is better approached as a link specifically with this 'Right' of Edwardian Conservatism.

Yet as a wing of a wider party, without structural independence and with a limited degree of political organisation, the Edwardian 'Right' is difficult to adequately define. Framed in an international context, Arno Mayer places the British 'Right' within a broader group of European "superpatriots", men who "clamoured for preparedness and foreign-policy pugnacity" and held "reactionary, ultraconservative, or protofascist views on domestic affairs."<sup>211</sup> Various historians of Britain, by contrast, focus on the domestic origins of such political extremism. Challenging the contention that British fascism was "an imitative movement", Dan Stone's study *Breeding Superman* coins the phrase "extremes of Englishness". Stone argues that various "extreme" elements of Edwardian political thought, such as militarism, anti-Alienism, and rural revivalism, together formed "a reactionary, sometimes revolutionary-reactionary, ideology". This imperfect blend of ideas or "channels

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<sup>210</sup> J. R. Jones, 'England', in H. Rogger and E. Weber, eds, *The European Right: A Historical Profile* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1965), p. 29.

<sup>211</sup> A. J. Mayer, 'Domestic Causes of the First World War', in L. Krieger and F. Stern, eds, *The Responsibility of Power* (London: MacMillan, 1968), p. 292.

of thinking”, Stone continues, add up to “an indigenous proto-fascism”.<sup>212</sup> While both of these analyses are useful, however, neither provide a watertight definition. As Stone’s imprecise language suggests, the Edwardian ‘Right’ has generally been approached with great caution, and treated as an inherently fluid concept.

Despite such complexity, a broad agreement has emerged (led by the work of Geoffrey Searle) that divides the Edwardian ‘Right’ into two interconnected groups: technocratic supporters of “national efficiency”, frustrated by partisanship and in favour of cross-party coalition; and the ‘Radical Right’.<sup>213</sup> Searle defines the ‘Radical Right’ in the following terms:

...a movement of rootless nationalists who felt alienated to a lesser or greater extent from *all* the major political organisations of the day...diverse in social origin and liable to quarrel on specific issues of policy...these people owned allegiance to a common set of attitudes and viewed politics in a way which gave them a distinct identity.<sup>214</sup>

Linking the concept with Mayer’s theory of a pan-European “revolt from the Right”, Searle lists a range of groups under this heading, including the imperially-minded “Reveille” movement, the group surrounding Leopold Maxse’s *National Review*, and most importantly, the rebellious “Diehard” opposition to the Parliament Bill. Accepting the diffuse nature of this grouping, Searle emphasises the common ground such movements shared, an opposition to the established political structure, a populist faith in the power of working class patriotism and the value of compulsory military service, a strong aversion to Liberalism and a general mistrust of modernism. Though the ‘Radical Right’ were not articulating the interests of an unrepresented class or socio-economic group, what gave them their unity, in Searle’s view,

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<sup>212</sup> D. Stone, *Breeding Superman: Nietzsche, Race and Eugenics in Edwardian and Interwar Britain* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002), p. 3.

<sup>213</sup> G. Searle, ‘Critics of Edwardian Society: The Case of the Radical Right’, in O’Day, ed, *The Edwardian Age*, pp. 82-85, A. Sykes, ‘The Radical Right and the Crisis of Conservatism before the First World War’, *The Historical Journal*, 26. 3 (1983), p. 662. For the ‘efficiency’ movement see Searle, *The Quest for National Efficiency*, Scally, *The Origins of the Lloyd George Coalition*.

<sup>214</sup> Searle, ‘Critics of Edwardian Society: The Case of the Radical Right’, in O’Day, ed, *The Edwardian Age*, p. 85.

“was a distinctive political *style* – compounded of dogmatism, intransigence, recklessness and a highly coloured rhetoric.”<sup>215</sup>

This distinction between these two groups is far from perfect. Many prominent and outspoken Conservatives, as Alan Sykes has argued, do not fit comfortably in either camp.<sup>216</sup> Nonetheless, they are highly beneficial in terms of contextualising the politics of Edwardian invasion literature. Although the literature’s authorship was by no means a homogenous political group, very few invasion narratives espouse the traditional model of Conservatism, whose adherents saw “no viable alternative to abiding by the rules of the party game, taking each issue as it arose, and waiting until...their opponents destroyed themselves by their own cupidity and folly”.<sup>217</sup> Moreover, though Edwardian invasion literature is heavily informed by the concepts of national efficiency (as this thesis will explore), a significant majority of the narratives promote the fears, principles, and arguments of the ‘Radical Right’. Many of the genre’s recurrent themes, such as the threat of nationalist and class upheaval, the need for major military reform, contempt for Liberalism, and a fear for the continuing value of ‘Britishness’, are arguably ‘Radical Right’ in character. Various authors, in turn, can be said to have self-identified with this ill-defined extremity of Edwardian Conservatism, including William Le Queux, James Blyth, and H. H. Munro. Such fiction rarely calls for political caution and moderation, but it regularly demands radical action to protect Britain from internal and external threats, delivered with a recklessness and sensationalism that matches the “distinctive political style” described by Searle. By assessing the representation of domestic political themes in these narratives, this thesis will argue that Edwardian invasion literature was primarily a creation of Searle’s ‘Radical Right’ rather than a Tory product.

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<sup>215</sup> G. Searle, ‘The ‘Revolt from the Right’ in Edwardian Britain’, in P. Kennedy and A. Nicholls, eds, *Nationalist and Racist Movements in Britain and Germany before 1914* (London and Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1981), p. 37.

<sup>216</sup> Sykes, ‘The Radical Right and the Crisis of Conservatism before the First World War’, *The Historical Journal*, pp. 663-664.

<sup>217</sup> Searle, ‘Critics of Edwardian Society: The Case of the Radical Right’, in O’Day, ed, *The Edwardian Age*, p. 82.

By offering a new reading of invasion literature, this project equally aims to better illuminate the domestic political climate of Edwardian Britain. This is primarily achieved through a reconsideration of the 'Edwardian Crisis'. Much of the debate surrounding this concept in the past has been strictly empirical, analysing whether the upheavals of the Edwardian period can accurately be said to have created a crisis situation (see section 1.2). Both Walter Arnstein and Peter Clarke, for example, argue that the political controversies of the period, severe though they were, did not threaten to destroy Britain's governmental or constitutional infrastructure, and as such, were not 'critical' in nature. Yet while such analysis is clearly necessary, it does not account for the contemporary experience of or belief in the validity of an unfolding national crisis. Though Edwardian Britain may not, objectively speaking, have been in crisis, many contemporary commentators interpreted their period through the language of crisis. Whether ruminating over a "serious deterioration in the national physique", debating the "political crisis at Westminster" during the Parliament Bill controversy, or portraying the Curragh incident as a precursor to civil war, such language helps highlight the contemporary value of the crisis concept.<sup>218</sup> This tendency was arguably at its strongest in the pages of invasion literature.<sup>219</sup> Responding to the fear of military invasion, and heavily shaped by concerns over domestic political upheaval, such works deliberately envisage worse-case scenarios to illustrate the dangers believed to be facing the nation. Many of these publications, as such, can be considered narratives of crisis. Edwardian invasion literature offers an opportunity, therefore, to highlight that some contemporaries believed that Edwardian Britain was in a state of crisis.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> G. F. Shee, 'The Deterioration in the National Physique', *The Nineteenth Century and After* (May, 1903), p. 797, 'The Constitutional Crisis', *Review of Reviews* (May, 1910), p. 429, 'Seventy Cavalry Officers at Irish Camp Resign', *Daily Mirror* (23<sup>rd</sup> March, 1914), p. 3.

<sup>219</sup> Once again, this can be seen from book titles alone. Of the eighty-four narratives that form this study's sample, five include the word 'peril' in their titles. Other common title words include 'danger' and 'terror'.

<sup>220</sup> This approach has been influenced by Kim A. Wagner's article "'Treading Upon Fires': The 'Mutiny'-Motif and Colonial Anxieties in British India", *Past and Present*, 218 (2013). Focusing on "the story of a 'non-event'", namely a popular panic over mud-daubing and the threat of a second Indian 'Mutiny', Wagner emphasises the significance of such anxieties: "The fact that trees were daubed with mud tells us very little about the nature of British rule in India. The fact that it caused a panic, however, is highly revealing of the colonial experience and provides a fascinating glimpse of the anxieties that shaped colonial policies", p. 162.

The principal arguments of this thesis are, in turn, framed by the broader analytical issue of anxiety. The fluid concept of anxiety - one of several emotional states foregrounded in the burgeoning History of Emotions discipline - raises various theoretical problems for scholarly analysis.<sup>221</sup> As Joanna Bourke has demonstrated in *Fear: A Cultural History*, the term anxiety can be employed to describe a wide range of social, political, and medical phenomena, from individual clinical pathologies through to incidents of mass psychosis and hysteria. Cautiously defining 'fear' as "an immediate, objective threat", and 'anxiety' as "an anticipated, subjective threat", Bourke warns that historians "must be extremely wary about imposing such distinctions on emotional states in the past".<sup>222</sup> Yet as Alan Hunt suggests in his article 'Anxiety and Social Explanation', historians have nevertheless regularly utilised what he terms 'Anxiety theory' without theoretical justification. Labelling anxiety "a submerged middle-term in socio-historical thought", Hunt argues that even the most "polished and sophisticated exponents" of 'Anxiety theory' have often "not felt the need to explore its unspoken assumptions or to justify their reliance on it."<sup>223</sup> In order to harness 'Anxiety theory' in a legitimate manner, therefore, this project's understanding of anxiety in Edwardian invasion literature requires a degree of explanation.

Though the distinction between 'fear' and 'anxiety' outlined above is imperfect, it provides a useful way of categorising the explicit and implicit concerns expressed in invasion narratives. The threat of invasion in Edwardian Britain should arguably be understood as a 'fear'. While a successful invasion of Britain during this period has generally been interpreted as militarily and politically problematic, foreign invasion was a relatively 'objective' concern that remained a plausible (if improbable) eventuality throughout the

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<sup>221</sup> For a useful introduction to this field see J. Plamper, 'The History of Emotions: An Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns', *History and Theory*, 49.2 (2010), pp. 237-265.

<sup>222</sup> J. Bourke, *Fear: A Cultural History* (London: Virago, 2006), p. 189. Ranajit Guha has defined these terms in a similar fashion in his article 'Not at Home in Empire'. Utilising the work of Søren Kierkegaard and Martin Heidegger, Guha understands 'fear' as a definite and identifiable threat. This contrasts with the nebulous nature of 'anxiety', which Guha explores through the context of colonisers and cultural isolation in British India, *Critical Inquiry*, 23.3 (1997), p. 486.

<sup>223</sup> A. Hunt, 'Anxiety and Social Explanation: Some Anxieties about Anxiety', *Journal of Social History*, 32.3 (1999), pp. 509-511.

Edwardian period.<sup>224</sup> The nature of invasion in invasion narratives, furthermore, is usually explicitly and objectively defined, rather than left as an implicit or undeveloped threat. By contrast, the domestic political concerns expressed in Edwardian invasion literature are best approached as ‘anxieties’. Varied and multi-faceted, the internal political concerns explored in such narratives are generally more abstract in nature than the overarching theme of invasion. Although many of the domestic political upheavals imagined in this literature were arguably more plausible than the danger of foreign attack, such concerns emerged out of multi-layered socio-political anxieties, far less concrete in form than the threat of invasion. The representation of social revolution, for example, covers several mutually reinforcing anxieties over physical health, military readiness, national identity, and political or class consciousness. While the ‘fear’ of invasion is the driving force of invasion narratives, such literature is fundamentally shaped by a wide range of social and political ‘anxieties’.

Such specific concerns are not, however, the only form of anxiety in Edwardian invasion literature. Though often located in particular threats – such as the example of social revolution given above – these narratives are also framed by a nebulous sense of anxiety about social and political change. Emerging out of an array of complex, ill-defined, and at times subconscious forces, this sweeping sense of anxiety can be seen to have formed part of the introspective and apprehensive zeitgeist of Edwardian Britain, famously explored by Samuel Hynes in *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*. These ephemeral analytical concepts are naturally rife with theoretical pitfalls, not least the question of whether it is legitimate “to apply the attributes of individuals to social aggregates” by identifying wider ‘social anxieties’ in individual expressions of anxiety.<sup>225</sup> It is nonetheless important to stress that Edwardian invasion narratives are shaped by a cyclical model of anxiety. The domestic political anxieties expressed in such literature clearly contributed to the general sense of social and political concern prevalent in Edwardian Britain. Yet equally, such anxieties can

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<sup>224</sup> Moon’s vast thesis ‘The Invasion of the United Kingdom’ explores this in the most detail. See also Longmate, *Island Fortress*, pp. 391-427. For a derisory German view of British invasion anxieties see Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War*, pp. 125-126.

<sup>225</sup> Hunt, ‘Anxiety and Social Explanation’ *Journal of Social History*, p. 519.



be seen as manifestations of a broader anxiety, rather than contributing factors. Through analysing the representation of social and political change in invasion narratives, this thesis will therefore present Edwardian invasion literature as a repository of both specific ‘anxieties’ and a broader, nebulous sense of anxiety.

The major methodological challenge of this project is establishing parameters for using fictional sources in historical research. The relationship between History and Literature is one that has received a great deal of scholarly attention. Much of this interest has concerned the comparatively recent history of the two subjects, tracking the process by which they evolved into distinct disciplines, and assessing how they differ in theory and practice.<sup>226</sup> Yet the disciplines remain, to an extent, intertwined. This is highlighted by the large number of historians who utilise literature as a historical archive. These scholars recognise, to use Allen Pasco’s words, that creative works “form a significant, well-integrated part of that tapestry created by a period’s economic, social, and political beliefs and values”.<sup>227</sup> Such studies have tended to harness literature in one of two ways. The first and most common model involves citing popular works of fiction in passing, either to support the significance of a particular line of enquiry, or to offer a cultural snapshot of the period in question. One illustrative example is *White Heat*, Dominick Sandbrook’s social and political history of the sixties. Aiming to question the “gaudy stereotypes” of the period, Sandbrook’s brief survey of literary trends emphasises variety - from Ian Fleming’s James Bond thrillers to the romances of Barbara Cartland - highlighting that “popular tastes in the sixties were at once more diverse and more conservative than is often imagined”.<sup>228</sup> A similar example (and for this project more topical) is *The Pity of War* by Niall Ferguson. Opening the work

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<sup>226</sup> See L. Brady, *Narrative Form in History and Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), pp. 3-5, and M. Krieger, ‘Fiction, History, and Empirical Reality’, *Critical Inquiry*, 1.2 (1974), pp. 335-360.

<sup>227</sup> A. H. Pasco, ‘Literature as Historical Archive’, *New Literary History*, 35.3 (2004), p. 389.

<sup>228</sup> D. Sandbrook, *White Heat: a History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London: Little, Brown, 2006), xvii and pp. 409-411.

with an exploration of future-war and invasion fiction, Ferguson identifies such narratives as symptomatic of an increasingly virulent culture of militarism in pre-1914 Britain.<sup>229</sup>

The alternative model involves centralising creative works in historical practice, closely analysing literary texts as historical evidence rather than focusing on more traditional archival material. Though this approach often straddles the boundary between historical analysis and literary criticism, numerous historians have produced works shaped by this approach. The work of the literary historian I. F. Clarke (discussed at length above) provides an illustrative example from invasion literature studies. These practices, however, are by no means confined to this discipline. One area that has produced a disproportionate number of such works is the study of eighteenth century France. In *The Great Cat Massacre*, for example, the cultural historian Robert Darnton aims to investigate “the way ordinary people made sense of the world” in the *Ancien Régime*. In the work’s opening chapter, the author explores a series of folk-tales popular among the French peasantry of the period, notably a “primitive version” of Little Red Riding Hood.<sup>230</sup> Dismissing the standard psychoanalytical interpretation as antihistorical, Darnton highlights the French origins of the story and the dark humour of its plot. Identified as part of a strong oral tradition, Darnton argues that such tales can be used as evidence of how French peasants made sense of the “harsh and dangerous” world they occupied.<sup>231</sup> Lynn Hunt takes a similar line in *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*. In developing her Freud-inspired “family model of politics”, she harnesses a wide range of sources, including many novels, in an effort “to get at the common historical and imaginative processes” that shaped the Revolution.<sup>232</sup> Exploring changing representations of patriarchy in eighteenth century French literature, Hunt describes the

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<sup>229</sup> N. Ferguson, *The Pity of War* (London: Allen Lane, 1998), pp. 1-7.

<sup>230</sup> R. Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and other Episodes in French Cultural History* (Philadelphia: Basic Books, 1984), p. 5.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9-13 and 53.

<sup>232</sup> L. Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 16.

novel as “an essential starting point for any consideration of the familial foundations of authority”.<sup>233</sup>

There is a strong precedent, therefore, for utilising literature as a historical resource. What is often less clear, however, is *how* historians should approach fictional sources. The theoretical status of literature is an issue that has been explored by a variety of scholars across several academic disciplines. The advent of ‘cultural criticism’, described by Alice Templeton as “the study of literature at work in its social context”, has significantly shaped the way in which literature is understood and approached.<sup>234</sup> Such developments undermined an older sociological approach that treated literature as unproblematic “social evidence and testimony”, offering a “precious record of modes and responses to peculiar social and cultural conditions”. Marxist literary theorists, for example, have analysed the aesthetic function of literature, emphasising the role of fiction in questioning (or reinforcing) prevailing social structures. In his essay ‘Literature and Sociology’, Raymond Williams argues that “in some of the greatest literature”, the reader experiences “the dramatisation of a process...in which the constituting elements of real social life and beliefs” are actualised.<sup>235</sup> For Williams, as Templeton explains, the cultural value of literature lies in “its power as an aesthetic structure, not in the truth of its themes”.<sup>236</sup> Postmodern scholars have tended, by contrast, to treat literature as one form of ‘text’ among many. As Linda Hutcheon argues in *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, “both history and fiction are discourses, that both constitute systems of signification by which we make sense of the past”.<sup>237</sup>

The relationship between history and fiction is, unsurprisingly, of central importance to this project. Despite the postmodern arguments of Hutcheon and others, whereby all texts rework ‘reality’ to a greater or lesser extent, utilising fiction as a historical source does

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<sup>233</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>234</sup> A. Templeton, ‘Sociology and Literature: Theories for Cultural Criticism’, *College Literature*, 19.2 (1992), p. 21.

<sup>235</sup> R. Williams, *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: Verso Editions and NLB, 1980), p. 25.

<sup>236</sup> Templeton, ‘Sociology and Literature’, *College Literature*, p. 26.

<sup>237</sup> L. Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory and Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 89.

present specific theoretical and methodological difficulties. The vast majority of invasion narratives under consideration in this thesis are not repositories of quantitative data, nor are they objective records of personal experience. As fictional texts, these sources are at best telling representations, and at worst, misleading imaginings. Narratives of invasion and future-war, as with verse, novels, and other fictional sources, have no obligation to truth or accuracy, existing not necessarily to teach or inform, but to entertain and to influence. Yet such methodological difficulties should not be allowed to mask the great value of literature as a historical source. Fictional and semi-fictional narratives are crucial for the study of Edwardian cultural history. In his book *Warrior Nation*, Michael Paris emphasises the cultural importance of popular literature, asserting that for much of the late-Victorian and Edwardian periods “the printed word was the main agent for the transmission of such ideas”. While Paris refers to the spread of “the pleasure culture of war”, his statement can arguably be applied to a wide range of cultural transfers.<sup>238</sup> Championing the form in 1914, H. G. Wells described fiction as “the only medium through which we can discuss the majority of the problems being raised in such bristling multitude by our contemporary social development.”<sup>239</sup> Paradoxically then, the theoretically problematic nature of fiction can be seen as contributing to its strength as a historical source, as unrestrained, non-objective assessments of their respective periods.

Though this project defends the use of fiction in historical research, it is important to reiterate that it should be used with great circumspection. Using the tenor of invasion narratives as evidence of increasing popular Germanophobia, for example, is the sort of generalising practice that undermines the value of this source material. An understanding of how to approach literature as a historical source, therefore, is crucial to any study that utilises fictional narratives. This is an area that has been examined by the sports historian Andy Harvey, in his article ‘Team Work? Using Sporting Fiction as an Historical Archive and Source of Developing Theoretical Approaches to Sports History’. Harvey identifies several

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<sup>238</sup> Paris, *Warrior Nation*, p. 10.

<sup>239</sup> H. G. Wells, *An Englishman Looks at the World* (London: Cassell and Co., 1914), p. 163.

epistemological approaches to the use of fiction in historical practice: as corroboration of knowledge; as constitutive of knowledge; as a text among texts; and as intuition and myth. The first approach emphasises that “fiction cannot generate knowledge”, and as such, should not be used as factual evidence. Fiction should enrich rather than inform research, offering “supplements to knowledge gained from the examination of other documents and records”.<sup>240</sup> The second approach, by contrast, suggests that in certain circumstances fictional sources “appear to have an impact on ‘social reality’”. Highlighting the influence of *Tom Brown’s Schooldays* on the popular image of the Victorian public school, Harvey illustrates how literature can alter perceptions of reality, thus ‘constituting’ a form of knowledge. While the third approach refers to the postmodernist understanding of ‘discourses’ outlined above, the fourth approach introduces the idea of “‘non-rational’ knowledge”. Offering Nick Hornby’s *Fever Pitch* as an example, Harvey suggests that some fictional assessments of cultural phenomena become “reference point[s] for cultural scholars”. This source of evidence may be ‘irrational’ in a Rankean sense, but it is arguably a valuable form of ‘knowledge’ nonetheless.<sup>241</sup>

The analytical approach of this thesis contains elements from three of the four approaches outlined by Harvey. By exploring the representation of internal political themes in invasion literature, these narratives are in sense used as “supplements of knowledge”, corroborating the upheaval of the Edwardian period through fictional portrayals of domestic political unrest. While not focusing on the popular reception of invasion narratives, this project also presents such fiction as having encouraged, compounded, and by extension, constituted, fears of foreign invasion among the authors of this literature. In basing historical research on a body of largely fictional sources, the project’s approach is also inevitably shaped by the concept of literature as a text among texts. This thesis does not offer a strictly postmodernist analysis of invasion literature (to the extent that such an analysis

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<sup>240</sup> A. Harvey, ‘Team Work? Using Sporting Fiction as an Historical Archive and Source of Developing Theoretical Approaches to Sports History’, *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 30.2 (2013), p. 135.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 136-141.

exists as a coherent and discreet form), as it recognises the unusual nature of fictional sources in historical practice (see above). What it does stress, however, is that such methodological issues are hardly unique. All primary source materials, be they archival records, personal memoirs, or newspapers, present their own specific analytical challenges. Furthermore, as Dominick LaCapra argues in his essay collection *History and Criticism*, all documents can be seen as “texts that supplement or rework ‘reality’ and not mere sources that divulge facts about reality”.<sup>242</sup> The nature of fiction as source material therefore, in the view of this project, is not radically different from comparable historical discourses.

## 1.5 - Conclusion

What this chapter has aimed to achieve is a clear statement of the goals and approach of the project. This had been done through an analysis that moves from the broad to the specific, addressing the period in question, the subject under study, and the analytical plans for the chosen source material. In exploring the historiographical trends of Edwardian studies, the chapter has highlighted the ongoing debate over the ‘crisis’ and ‘golden age’ narratives, as well as emphasising the sense of transition and change that often characterises historical studies of the Edwardian period. The survey of previous research on British invasion literature, in turn, has stressed that this varied historiography is generally shaped by consensus rather than disagreement or debate. Finally, the ‘Approach and Methodology’ section of the chapter illustrates how the thesis draws these two historiographies together. This process is based on foregrounding the representation of domestic political upheaval in the project’s sample of Edwardian invasion narratives. By contextualising invasion literature in the domestic political history of pre-1914 Britain, and highlighting the prevalence of internal political issues in such narratives, this thesis aims to

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<sup>242</sup> D. LaCapra, *History and Criticism* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 11.

illustrate the thematic complexity of invasion literature, to reconsider the ideological nature of the genre's authorship, and to reassess the value of the 'Edwardian Crisis' concept.

## **Limitless Britishness: The Nature of National Identity in Edwardian Invasion**

### **Literature**

#### **2.1 – Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to assess the representation of ‘Britishness’ in Edwardian invasion literature. It will begin by exploring the analytical parameters of national identity, giving particular focus to Benedict Anderson’s concept of ‘imagined communities’, and emphasising the varied, non-uniform treatment of national identity in invasion narratives. The chapter goes on to identify some of the defining qualities and processes that shape the literature’s multiple understandings of Britishness. These include the complex relationship between national and imperial identity in Edwardian Britain; the prevalence of the “English presumption”, or the cultural expansion of Englishness; the growing cultural importance of the rural idyll; and the influence of competing national, social, and religious identities on the representation of British national identity.<sup>1</sup> Despite significant contrasts in understanding and interpretation, the national identity of Edwardian invasion literature will be presented as unusually flexible, capable of assimilating a range of contradictory social and political forces. The chapter will finish with an analysis of the various anxieties that surround the representation of national identity in invasion narratives. These include concerns over German economic infiltration; foreign immigration (shaped by a pronounced anti-Semitism); social decadence; the negative influence of urbanisation; and the declining importance of religion. Some of the clearest definitions of Britishness in Edwardian invasion literature, the chapter concludes, are oppositional in nature. While such narratives struggle to explicitly outline what Britishness is, they express far more confidence in what it is not.

The rationale behind analysing these representations of national identity is twofold. Firstly, such analysis provides a highly beneficial introduction to the insular nature of Edwardian invasion literature. These visions of near-future invasion (often resulting in

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<sup>1</sup> J. H. Grainger, *Patriotisms: Britain 1900-1939* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), pp. 48-50



catastrophic defeat) are arguably as much comments on the social, political, and cultural status of Britain as they are warnings of imminent military collapse. The questions raised by invasion narratives concerning the nature of Britishness, such as over minority nationalisms, class consciousness, and the tension between rural and urban visions of Britain, clearly emphasise the importance of domestic political issues in Edwardian invasion narratives. Yet secondly, such issues also highlight that this fiction provided a forum for debating the nature of national identity. By writing narratives in which the cultural and political status quo is challenged, or even destroyed, these writers produce implicit understandings of national identity – of what Edwardian Britain is, and how it is threatened by a variety of internal and external forces. While this chapter does not offer a definition of Edwardian Britishness, then, it highlights that questions of national identity exerted an important influence on contemporary invasion literature.

## 2.2 - Imagined Britishness

Fears of the external 'other', and of invasion, have regularly been identified as an influential factor in the formation of British political and cultural identities. In *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* Linda Colley argues that the modern sense of Britishness was born out of expediency. The disparate population of Great Britain

came to define themselves as Britons – in addition to defining themselves in many other ways – because circumstances impressed them with the belief that they were different from those beyond their shores, and in particular different from their prime enemy, the French. Not so much consensus or homogeneity or centralisation at home, as a strong sense of dissimilarity from those without proved to be the essential cement.<sup>2</sup>

This principle of dissimilarity has been directly applied to British invasion literature by A. Michael Matin. Just as Colley's 'Britishness' emerged in response to French intrigue and

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<sup>2</sup> L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Pimlico, 2003), p. 17.

ambition, late-Victorian and Edwardian invasion narratives “depict Britain stimulated to unity and greatness by the onslaughts of hostile Others, either French, Russian, or German.” The writing of such works therefore, as Matin explains, “constituted exercises in imagining (and hence ideologically producing) a sense of, and a passionate commitment to, Britishness.”<sup>3</sup> Matin is right to highlight this link between invasion literature and the ideological production of British national identity. It is important to stress, however, that the representation of Britishness in this literature was not consistent or unproblematic. Instead, such representations include a complex, contradictory mixture of regional, national, and imperial loyalties, differing cultural expectations, and inconsistent political allegiances. Narratives of invasion arguably did not produce a singular or definite sense of ‘Britishness’. Instead, they reflected the vague and ill-defined quality of ‘national identity’.

This chapter aims to explore more fully the complex, non-uniform representations of Britishness in Edwardian invasion literature. The first step in this process is to establish some analytical parameters for this project’s understanding of national identity. Far from a straightforward term or quality, national identity cuts across a variety of theoretical concepts. As an idea it oscillates between the ephemeral and fluid principle of the nation and the rigid infrastructure of the political state. Further complicating this picture are theories and values such as race, ethnicity, patriotism, culture, empire, and the idea of society. Most significantly, national identity cuts to the heart of the extended theoretical and historiographical debate over the concept of nationalism.<sup>4</sup> This debate has been dominated, as A. D. Smith explains, by three main issues. Firstly, is ‘the nation’ a concept of absolute or proximate value; is it consistent and timeless or something shaped by time, place and context? Secondly, what is a nation in social and anthropological terms; an ethno-cultural

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<sup>3</sup> A. Michael Matin, ‘Securing Britain: Figures of Invasion in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Fiction’, unpublished PhD thesis, Columbia University (1997), p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> This is a fascinating debate of which this project only scratches the surface. An excellent critical survey of the debate is A. D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism* (London: Routledge, 1998). See also Grainger, *Patriotisms*, E. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), D. Powell, *Nationhood and Identity, The British State Since 1800* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2002), G. Delanty and K. Kumar, eds, *The SAGE Handbook of Nations and Nationalism* (London: Sage, 2006).

community bound by “common history and shared language”, or a socio-political community based on “common territory...citizenship rights and common laws”? Finally, are nations best understood as immemorial communities “rooted in a long history of shared ties and culture”, or are they in fact social constructs fundamentally tied to “the special conditions of a modern epoch”?<sup>5</sup>

In analysing the representation of British identity in Edwardian invasion narratives, this chapter is not intending to directly address or answer these three questions. Rather, it will attempt to assess the authorial understanding of nation, nationalism, and national identity. For this analysis Benedict Anderson’s theory of ‘imagined communities’ is particularly instructive. Anderson defines the nation as “an imagined political community”, explaining that while the members of a nation can never hope to meet all of their fellow-members, “in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.” Distinguishing his theory from that of Ernest Gellner, who argues that nationalism “*invents* nations where they do not exist”, Anderson rejects the idea that nations are inherently false or fabricated. Though they may originate as top-down constructions, nations ultimately develop into a cultural reality. This transformation occurs through a variety of modernising forces, such as print capitalism and industrialisation, the decline of sacred languages and emergence of localised vernaculars, and the rise of competing ‘national’ imperialisms. These developments help nations sow deep and tangible cultural (if not necessarily historical) roots. As a result, Anderson argues that such communities are best analysed not through their socio-political structures but “by the style in which they are imagined”.<sup>6</sup> The representation of national identity within British invasion literature, then, is a valuable Edwardian example of this Andersonian model, in which ‘the nation’ is defined and perpetuated by its cultural representations. Furthermore, the plural term ‘communities’ develops an unintended significance when approaching this body of literature. Though

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<sup>5</sup> Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed. (London: Verso, 2006), pp. 6-7.

these narratives are all imaginings of a single community, namely Britain, their diffuse and varied interpretations of Britishness in fact produce a series of imagined communities.

It is also important to emphasise the ‘implicit’ nature of national identity in Edwardian invasion narratives. While clearly partaking in a contemporary debate over the concept of national identity, the authors of invasion literature largely did so in an indirect sense. These narratives rarely explicitly outline what did or should constitute Britishness, and certainly never attempt to define it in objective or theoretical terms. Instead, they betray a sense of implicit assumption, a presumption that their individual visions of Britain perfectly align with the wider national understanding. An interesting characterisation of this ‘implicitness’ is Mr Brown, the proud and disdainful protagonist of Guy du Maurier’s play *An Englishman’s Home* (first performed in 1909). Brown is a character of strong patriotic instinct, but who struggles to adequately define the exact parameters of his national identity. The qualities he associates with Englishness over the course of the play include bravery, pluck, individual liberty, fiscal transparency, and opposition to industrial action. In defending the legitimacy of barracking the referee at football matches during the first act, the breadth of his notion of Englishness descends into confusion:

The right of every Englishman to express his approval or disapproval with the work of those who are in a sense servant of the public is a principle with which I am in complete sympathy. We – er – are a free people, and we should never neglect an opportunity for impressing that fact on – er – those who may be inclined to doubt it.<sup>7</sup>

Ephemeral and all-encompassing, Brown’s patriotism is defined by an absolute faith of conviction that he is representative of Englishness. Yet he appears unable to properly explain what constitutes this English identity. Paradoxically, then, Mr Brown has a firm and unshakable conviction in an ill-defined, unfixed idea.

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<sup>7</sup> G. du Maurier, *An Englishman’s Home* (Milton Keynes: Kessinger Publishing, 2010), p. 12.

As a character and not an author, the example of Mr Brown is a curious one. In writing *An Englishman's Home*, du Maurier arguably used Brown to critique contemporary British attitudes towards military service and the irrational nature of jingoistic Edwardian patriotism.<sup>8</sup> It is therefore highly significant that Brown's words closely resemble the representation of national identity in invasion literature more broadly, as this chapter aims to emphasise. These narratives undoubtedly took part in, to paraphrase Matin, the production of an ideological commitment to a sense of Britishness. Yet the sense of Britishness produced by such literature was not unitary, but multiform. Approached from an Andersonian point of view, these imaginings pay tribute to the cultural purchase of the nation in Edwardian Britain. However, the literature produced many contrasting and conflicting 'imagined communities'. One quality that binds these images is a quality personified in Mr Brown, implicit faith in an ephemeral, ill-defined understanding of Britishness.

### 2.3 - The State of the Nation

Before assessing these narrative representations of British national identity, it is worth considering the regional and national backgrounds of the authors in question. Of the seventy contributors within this project's sample of Edwardian invasion literature, all but a handful were 'British'. This minority of non-British writers consisted of two Americans (James Barnes and Arthur Kipling) and one German (August Niemann). Returning to the majority, one can identify some interesting trends. Only two of the authors included were Scottish (Patrick Vaux and Gordon Stables) though 'Hew Scot', the pseudonymous writer of *The Way of War* (1907) may well be a third.<sup>9</sup> A significantly larger proportion of the authorship were of Irish background, although Edwardian concepts of 'Irishness' were far from straightforward. While several authors can be said to have been of Anglo-Irish

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<sup>8</sup> For a detailed analysis of the origins, production, and reception of *An Englishman's Home* see N. Hiley, N. Hiley, 'The Play, the Parody, the Censor and the Film', *Intelligence & National Security*, 6.1 (1991).

<sup>9</sup> Aside from its unsubtle pseudonym, *The Way of War* (London: John Long, 1907) is also set largely in Scotland, revolving around a German plot to invade Britain via the Firth of Forth.

extraction (such as John Dawson Mayne and Wilfred Newton), others identified more closely with the 'Irish nation', through such movements as the Gaelic Revival and the resurgent forces of Irish political independence. The author of *The Red Leaguers* (1903) J. W. Bullock, for example, rejected a strict protestant upbringing in his flirtations with Irish nationalism, and adopted the Gaelic *Shan Fadh* in the place of his given John William. A final authorial minority of note comprised those contributors born in the British Dominions or in British colonies. This group includes Rudyard Kipling (Bombay), H. H. Munro (Burma), Frederick Guggisberg (Canada), and M. P. Sheil (Montserrat).

The vast majority of this authorship, then, was of an English background. England, of course, was not an entirely homogenous entity, highlighted by the influence of regional identities on a number of the narratives under examination.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, this English authorial majority played a crucial role in the formation and projection of national identity within this literature, as it is heavily shaped by what J. H. Grainger has described as the "English Presumption". Despite the eighteenth century emergence of Britain as a political entity, 'Britishness' had remained indefinite by nature. As an identity it was, as Grainger asserts, "widely disseminated, often bluffly celebrated but seldom analysed." What had arguably developed in its stead was a cultural projection of "the predominant identity" outwards, meaning that Edwardian Britishness was Englishness writ-large.<sup>11</sup> This 'presumption' is demonstrated by the fact that in many invasion narratives England and Britain are almost interchangeable terms. When du Maurier's Mr Brown ruminates on the rights of an Englishman to enjoy unmolested privacy in the example above, he does not mean to exclude non-English Britons, but rather to incorporate them as Englishmen by proxy. Similarly, in *The Secret* by E. P. Oppenheim (1907), the brilliantly named Hardross Courage possesses at different times a "thoroughly British sentiment" and "an Englishman's

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<sup>10</sup> One author influenced by regionalism was James Blyth. Having grown up in Fritton, Norfolk, he often included extended descriptions of the Broads in his novels, such as within the Ruritanian settings of *The Tyranny* (London: William Heinemann, 1907) and *The Peril of Pines Place* (London: F. V. White and Co., 1912).

<sup>11</sup> Grainger, *Patriotisms*, pp. 48-50.

natural desire to see fair play”, though where one ends and the other begins is never entirely clear.<sup>12</sup>

This expansive Englishness is particularly evident when considering the construction of British imperial identity. While what might be called ‘domestic Britishness’ (i.e. British identity within the United Kingdom) is a difficult quality to define, the relationship between empire and national identity is equally problematic. By the early twentieth century the British Empire, though beginning to experience relative economic decline, was near its territorial zenith. The cultural value of empire, as discussed in the opening chapter, was also at its height. Yet despite its valued position, the empire throughout the period “was assumed and yet critiqued, was understood and yet always needed to be explained”, just as ‘imperial belonging’ remained a symbolically powerfully but ill-defined mode of being.<sup>13</sup> Though undoubtedly subject to wider cultural influences, the predominant quality of Edwardian imperial identity was arguably that of the ‘English presumption’. This equated to what Anderson describes as “stretching the short, tight skin of the nation over the gigantic body of the Empire”.<sup>14</sup> Petra Rau has argued that Englishness was well-suited to this expansive role, as at the time it “denoted a set of cultural values firmly attached to contemporary notions of ‘race’ and ‘national character’ that had become legitimising fictions for expansion.” As a result, “‘Britishness...really meant ‘Englishness in the Empire’”.<sup>15</sup>

Whether English or British in nature, imperialism was certainly at the forefront of the understanding of national identity among the authors of Edwardian invasion narratives. This was in part the product of direct imperial experience, as many of the contributors to the literature were familiar with Britain’s imperial world. Most commonly this was through the

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<sup>12</sup> E. P. Oppenheim, *The Secret*, (London: Ward, Lock and Co., 1907), pp. 9 and 49.

<sup>13</sup> P. M. Krebs, *Gender, Race, and the Writing of Empire: Public Discourse and the Boer War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 86.

<sup>15</sup> P. Rau, *English Modernism, National Identity and the Germans, 1890-1950*, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p. 2. This expansive understanding of Englishness is similar to what Krishan Kumar has termed “imperial nationalism”. Kumar argues that collective national identities (such as Britishness) often provide the dominant cultural or ethnic group (in this case the English) with “a special sense of themselves and their destiny”. See K. Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 34.

military, as a large minority of the authors were serving or former soldiers who had spent time in Britain's colonies. Notable individual examples of this include the military historian and author of *The New Battle of Dorking* (1900) Colonel Frederic Maude, who served in India with the Royal Engineers, and the journalist and writer Edgar Wallace (*Private Selby*), who served with the Medical Staff Corps in South Africa prior to the outbreak of the South African War.<sup>16</sup> Other authors played non-combative roles in this conflict, such as Erskine Childers (*Riddle of the Sands*) who volunteered as a driver.<sup>17</sup> More unusual was the life of the soldier-cum-colonial administrator Frederick Guggisberg (*Modern Warfare; or, How our Soldiers Fight*), whose career began with the Royal Engineers in Singapore and ended as Commander in Chief of British Guiana.<sup>18</sup> Outside of the military, H. H. Munro (*When William Came*) briefly served in the Burmese police, but contracted malaria and was forced to return to his home in Devon. A more successful colonial career was that of John Dawson Mayne (*The Triumph of Socialism*), who trained as a barrister in Dublin before becoming Professor of Law at Presidency College, Madras.<sup>19</sup> Even those authors that remained in Britain were often zealously committed to the cause of British imperialism, such as Alec John Dawson (*The Message*), editor of the weekly pamphlet *The Standard of Empire*.<sup>20</sup> The boundary between 'British' and 'imperial' identities among the authors of invasion literature, then, is difficult to firmly locate.

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<sup>16</sup> S. Kemp, C. Mitchell and D. Trotter, *Edwardian Fiction: An Oxford Companion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 272, E. F. Bleiler, *Science-Fiction: The Early Years* (Kent OH: Kent State University Press, 1990), p. 485, D. Glover, 'Wallace, (Richard Horatio) Edgar (1875–1932)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36703> (accessed 18th March 2014).

<sup>17</sup> J. Ring, 'Childers, (Robert) Erskine (1870–1922)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32401>, (accessed 18th March 2014).

<sup>18</sup> 'GUGGISBERG, Brig.-Gen. Sir (Frederick) Gordon', *Who Was Who* (London: A & C Black, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing plc, 1920–2007), online ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, December 2007), <http://www.ukwhoswho.com/view/article/oupww/whowaswho/U210535> (accessed 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014). Other authors strayed out of the empire into more unusual foreign adventures, such as Allen Upward's involvement in the 1897 Greco-Turkish War.

<sup>19</sup> D. Hibberd, 'Munro, Hector Hugh [Saki] (1870–1916)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35149> (accessed 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014), C. E. Buckland, *Dictionary of Indian Biography*, (London: Swan Sonnenschein and Co., 1906), p. 280.

<sup>20</sup> 'DAWSON, A. J.', *Who Was Who*, online ed., <http://www.ukwhoswho.com/view/article/oupww/whowaswho/U236452> (accessed 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014).



This thesis has confined itself to exploring the domestic political anxieties of Edwardian invasion literature, rather than the genre's pronounced imperial anxieties. Yet as the question of national identity highlights, it is difficult to separate these two areas. As experienced imperial administrators and soldiers, many of the authors of invasion narratives were, in a sense, products of the Empire. For these writers, as A. Michael Matin has argued, "imperial and national security issues tended to be intertwined and mutually reinforcing".<sup>21</sup> In the same manner, authorial understandings of Edwardian internal political upheaval are rarely entirely removed from the broader imperial context. Issues such as the fear of physical degeneration and the campaign for national efficiency were active, as Gavin Rand and Kim Wagner have argued, "both in the centre and at the periphery of empire", albeit with significantly varied consequences.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, the Empire and 'the nation' were both settings of anxiety, in which national identity was constructed against 'non-British' forces. Just as 'domestic Britishness' was often constructed in opposition to a range of social and political agents (as the next section of this chapter explores), 'imperial Britishness' was often defined against the colonised majority.<sup>23</sup> Rather than a confident expression of British power, the Empire regularly produced a super-patriotic, introspective, and paranoid form of national identity. The strongest sense of Edwardian Britishness, and by extension the gravest fears for British security, were often found at the periphery of empire.<sup>24</sup> Paradoxically, therefore, the domestic political anxieties of Edwardian invasion narratives are often informed by imperial understandings of Britishness.

Despite taking part in the cultural expansion of Englishness, there is little sense of consensus or certainty within Edwardian invasion narratives as to what Englishness

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<sup>21</sup> A. Michael Matin, "'The Hun is At The Gate!': Historicizing Kipling's Militaristic Rhetoric, from the Imperial Periphery to the National Center', 'The Russian Threat to British India', *Studies in the Novel*, 31.3 (1999), p. 321.

<sup>22</sup> G. Rand and K. A. Wagner, 'Recruiting the 'Martial Races': Identities and Military Service in Colonial India, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 46.3-4 (2012), p. 245.

<sup>23</sup> R. Guha, 'Not at Home in Empire', *Critical Inquiry*, 23.3 (1997), pp. 483-484.

<sup>24</sup> There is a large literature on this concept. For good summaries see K. Kumar, 'Empire, Nation, and National Identities', in A. Thompson, ed, *Britain's Experience of Empire in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 298-329, and B. Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 227-254.

represents. Authors typically portray Englishness as covert and unassuming, akin to what Grainger describes as a “rational and affectionate regard for the country in which we are born and for the privileges we enjoy in it”.<sup>25</sup> In these terms there is little to distinguish between authorial ideas of identity, duty, and responsibility. As the young hero of *The Boy Galloper* (1903) narrates on the eve of battle, his motivation is drawn from “a steadfast resolve to do one’s duty as thoroughly and doggedly as circumstances will permit.”<sup>26</sup> In the same vein of selfless bravery, one civilian seaman of Walter Wood’s *The Enemy in our Midst* (1906) dismisses his heroic role in a mine clearing operation: “I’m only an Englishman, chippin’ in at doin’ ‘is duty – like Nelson. A lot of us do that – but we arn’t expected to shout about it.”<sup>27</sup> Despite consistently appearing in the place of ‘Britishness’, English identity in these examples represents little more than modesty and fortitude in the face of danger, the quintessential ‘stiff upper lip’. Be it descriptions of sailors before battle that begin “to chaff each other, and make humorous remarks in low-toned growls on the seamanship of the enemy”,<sup>28</sup> or a passing reference to the “proud fortitude and inflexible resolve” of the mass populace, such images herald the steady countenance of the typical Englishman, and by extension, the typical Briton.<sup>29</sup>

A more concrete instance of Edwardian invasion literature’s ‘imperial nationalism’ is the representation of London. Rarely associated with England or even Britain, London is almost always “the great heart of the Empire”.<sup>30</sup> Such representations, though somewhat romanticised, were by no means a fiction. With a population of seven million people by the end of the Victorian period, Edwardian London was the biggest city in the world, remained an important seaport, and was an unrivalled centre of global finance. Furthermore, the internationalism of London was demonstrated not only in global trade but in its cosmopolitan

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<sup>25</sup> Grainger, *Patriotisms*, p. 34.

<sup>26</sup> L. James, *The Boy Galloper* (Edinburgh and London: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1903), p. 232.

<sup>27</sup> W. Wood, *The Enemy in our Midst, The Story of a Raid on England* (London: John Long, 1906), p. 222.

<sup>28</sup> A. C. Curtis, *A New Trafalgar* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1902), p. 46.

<sup>29</sup> L. Tracy, *The Invaders* (London: C. A. Pearson, 1901), p.50.

<sup>30</sup> *The Boy Galloper*, p. 13.

population, which included sizable Jewish, Irish, and West Indian communities.<sup>31</sup> This status was both reflected and celebrated in contemporary invasion narratives. In Erskine Childers's classic work of espionage fiction *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903), the protagonist Carruthers records a ferry journey to Holland in just such imagery. Standing on the deck of a Flushing steamer as it navigates the calm waters of the Thames estuary, the ship is described as passing "the cordon of scintillating lightships that watch over the sea-roads to the imperial city like pickets round a sleeping army".<sup>32</sup> A similar tone is struck by A. J. Dawson in *The Message* (1907), as London is detailed as "the storied heart of Empire" and as "the centre of the world's intelligence".<sup>33</sup> Developing this latter idea, George Griffith in his final novel *The Lord of Labour* (1911) described London not simply as an imperial metropolis, but as "the Capital of the World".<sup>34</sup>

Robert Cole's short story *The Struggle for Empire: A Story of the Year 2236* (1900) provides a fascinating extension of this particular theme. The work is not strictly one of invasion, but is rather an early example of space-exploration science fiction.<sup>35</sup> In Cole's 2236, Earth and its solar system are governed by the Anglo-Saxon Federation, a historical fusion of the US, Germany, and the British Empire. Thanks to huge technological advances, including "cigar shaped vessels with anti-gravitation apparatus", humankind has "settled, colonised, exploited, and looted many planetary systems". However, on discovering the Sirians, another intelligent, colonising race native to the planet Kairet, the clash of interests familiar to colonialism on Earth raises its head. The ensuing interstellar war initially goes against Earth, even reaching the planet itself, before a breakthrough in weapons technology, namely a gun that nullifies the antigravity apparatus of the Sirian ships, allows for a reversal, and eventual human victory. The science fiction scholar Everett Bleiler held the author Cole, of whom little is known, in high esteem, considering it "astonishing that no one has traced

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<sup>31</sup> P. Thompson, *The Edwardians: The Remaking of British Society*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 26-28, A. Briggs, 'London: The World City', in *Victorian Cities*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), pp. 311-360.

<sup>32</sup> E. Childers, *The Riddle of the Sands* (London: Penguin, 1995), p. 24.

<sup>33</sup> A. J. Dawson, *The Message* (Boston MA: Dana Estes and Co., 1907), p. 280.

<sup>34</sup> G. Griffith, *The Lord of Labour* (London: F. V. White and Co., 1911), p. 176.

<sup>35</sup> Bleiler, *Science Fiction*, pp. 147-148.

this important British writer". Bleiler additionally compared *The Struggle for Empire* to H. G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds*, "to which it is superior in concept, if weaker in execution".<sup>36</sup> One contemporary review was, by contrast, far less generous, asserting that "Grotesques of this kind should at least have some relation to the conditions of nature and existence."<sup>37</sup> Yet it is easy to understand Bleiler's fondness for the work, especially from its fantastical opening passage:

It was early in the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup> of June, in the year 2236. The sun rose in unrivalled splendour over the immense city of London, the superb capital, not only of England, but of the world, the Solar System, and the stars.<sup>38</sup>

Such was the faith in late-Victorian London within this literature. Rather than static in nature, the city's identity could readily shift from imperial metropolis to capital of the solar system.

In the same way that London is regularly celebrated as the glorious capital of empire, similar moments of veneration occur within the literature towards a variety of imperial symbols. One such incident is found in Patrick Vaux's *When the Eagle Flies Seaward* (1907), in which German naval patrols are indiscriminately targeting British passenger liners. Openly deriding the fear of his civilian passengers, the captain of one vessel asserts that "he valued a single thread of the Red Ensign a d\_\_\_\_d sight more than their blamed carcasses".<sup>39</sup> Here then, the symbolic value of the Royal Navy's flag is given much higher regard than the lives of civilians onboard. This sentiment is echoed in Saki's dystopian short story *When William Came* (1913). While the narrative is set largely in a post-war German-occupied London, the sixteenth chapter 'Sunrise' sees a shift in location to a hill station in India, to which the widowed Mrs Kerrick and her sons have emigrated following the recent British

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid. Though not attempted here, a comparison of the inverted colonialism of *The War of the Worlds* and the expanded colonialism of *The Struggle for Empire* would be highly beneficial. For a possible analytical model see I. Cornils, 'The Martians are Coming! War, Peace, Love, and Scientific Progress in H.G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds* and Kurd Lasswitz's *Auf Zwei Planeten*', *Comparative Literature*, 55.1 (2003), pp. 24-41. See also R. Crossley, 'From Invasion to Liberation: Alternative Visions of Mars, Planet of War', in D. Seed, ed, *Future Wars: The Anticipations and the Fears* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), pp. 66-84.

<sup>37</sup> 'A Church, Much Nonsense, and Two Novels', *The Outlook*, 5.117 (1900), pp. 409-410.

<sup>38</sup> R. W. Cole, *The Struggle for Empire: A Story of the Year 2236* (London: Elliot Stock, 1900), p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> P. Vaux, *When the Eagle Flies Seaward* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1907), p. 106.

defeat. Visited by a travelling French naturalist, who evidently struggles to understand why one should sacrifice a life of high society for the relative depravation of a colonial outpost, Mrs Kerrick leads the Frenchman to her garden, in which there is a 'sacred tree' "that we could not grow in England":

The Frenchman followed the direction of her eyes and saw a tall, bare pole at the summit of the hillock...three brown-faced boys appeared under the straight, bare pole. A cord shivered and flapped, and something ran swiftly up into the air, and swung out in the breeze that blew across the hills – a blue flag with red and white crosses...‘That is why we live out here,’ said the Englishwoman quietly.<sup>40</sup>

‘Britishness’ here is about a sense of rights, privileges, and political sovereignty, not ‘the flag’ in a material sense. Nor in this circumstance is it tied to a specific location. With the Eagle standard of Imperial Germany “flapping in the sunlight” over Buckingham Palace, ‘Britishness’ could no longer be practised in Britain itself.<sup>41</sup>

A second theme of this sort found in Edwardian invasion literature concerns British Army uniforms. In *The Unpardonable War* by James Barnes (1904), an unusual work that depicts an Anglo-American conflict pursued regretfully on both sides, the traditional British colours form part of a lament for a mythical near-past. As a party of officers meet mid-battlefield for unsanctioned talks, they “spoke the language of the old red-coated days, when men met eye to eye, when butt and point were plied and hilt rang to blade”.<sup>42</sup> Other authors, such as W. E. Cairnes, saw little benefit in these antiquated uniforms. Following work as military correspondent for the *Westminster Gazette* during the South African War, in 1900 Cairnes wrote *An Absent-Minded War*, an analysis that heavily criticised the preparation for and conduct of operations in South Africa. Provocatively describing the War Office as “that shrine of mediocrity and incompetence”, Cairnes criticised the army’s failure to enact basic

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<sup>40</sup> G. T. Chesney and ‘Saki’ (H. H. Munro), *The Battle of Dorking and When William Came: A Story of London under the Hohenzollerns* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 162.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>42</sup> J. Barnes, *The Unpardonable War* (New York: MacMillan, 1904), p. 311.

modernisations.<sup>43</sup> He was particularly adamant that army uniforms needed major reform. It was “idiotic”, Cairnes thought, “to send our troops to manoeuvres in conspicuous uniforms which they could not wear for five minutes in real warfare and survive.”<sup>44</sup> Developing this principle the following year in his future-war narrative *The Coming Waterloo*, Cairnes emphasised the irrational nature of opposing such change. When preparing to disembark on French shores, his lead character Walter expresses disgust at his fellow soldiers’ newly camouflaged uniforms, with the army having abandoned “the scarlet coat which he and most other people had for so long associated with the name of the British soldier”. The French enemy, by contrast, are still sporting “blue coats and scarlet breeches, a dress certainly sanctified by its historical associations”.<sup>45</sup> Despite such reservations, the British soldiers win a resounding victory in their invasion of France, a success that owes much to embracing modernisation. In this instance, then, the cultural importance of the red-coat is a dead-weight, threatening to hold back Britain’s military advance.

Yet Cairnes was no less imaginatively indebted to tradition and past glories than the authorship in general. *The Coming Waterloo* as a title, after all, appealed to a victorious Napoleonic heritage, as did such works as *Trafalgar Refought* (1905) and *A New Trafalgar*. In the case of the latter, written in 1902 by A. C. Curtis, the narrative’s conclusive naval battle is consciously staged on 20<sup>th</sup> November, to coincide with the anniversary of the Battle of Quiberon Bay. Not only appealing to naval victories of old, the narrative also stresses the martial spirit of Britain’s diverse ethnic heritage. The British sailors preparing for battle are described as having “The wild blood of Sweyn and Cnut, of thousands of fierce Nor’landers, whose very names are dead in a past still living”.<sup>46</sup> That Cnut, himself an invader of England, here appears as a symbol of British resistance is an irony that Curtis leaves unexplored. Instead, ‘Britishness’ is the sum of its ethnically complex historical parts, able to incorporate Danish kings as easily as Edwardian Britons. In A. J. Dawson’s work *The*

<sup>43</sup> W. E. Cairnes, *An Absent-Minded War* (London: John Milne, 1900), p. 70.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166.

<sup>45</sup> W. E. Cairnes, *The Coming Waterloo*, (London: Archibald and Constable, 1901), pp. 14-15.

<sup>46</sup> *A New Trafalgar*, p. 223.

*Message* this tendency is pushed even further back into British antiquity. Having returned to his native Dorset village following the successful German invasion of Britain, the lead character Dick Mordan experiences a life-changing vision (see *Figure 2.1*), where images of anti-Roman resistance materialise in the clouds:

I saw shaggy warriors with huge pointless swords, their hilts decorated with the teeth of wild beasts...I saw rude chariots of war, with murderous scythe-blades on their wheels - and, in a flash then, the figure of Boadicea: that valiant mother of our race, erect and fearless in her chariot...<sup>47</sup>

Regardless of her pre-Roman, pre Anglo-Saxon, and pre-Norman status, Dawson's Boadicea is intended to represent a confident, straightforward example of national identity, inspiring Mordan to a truer sense of his own Britishness. The British nation of *The Message*, in Anderson's words, "loom[s] out of an immemorial past".<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *The Message*, p. 233.

<sup>48</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 11.

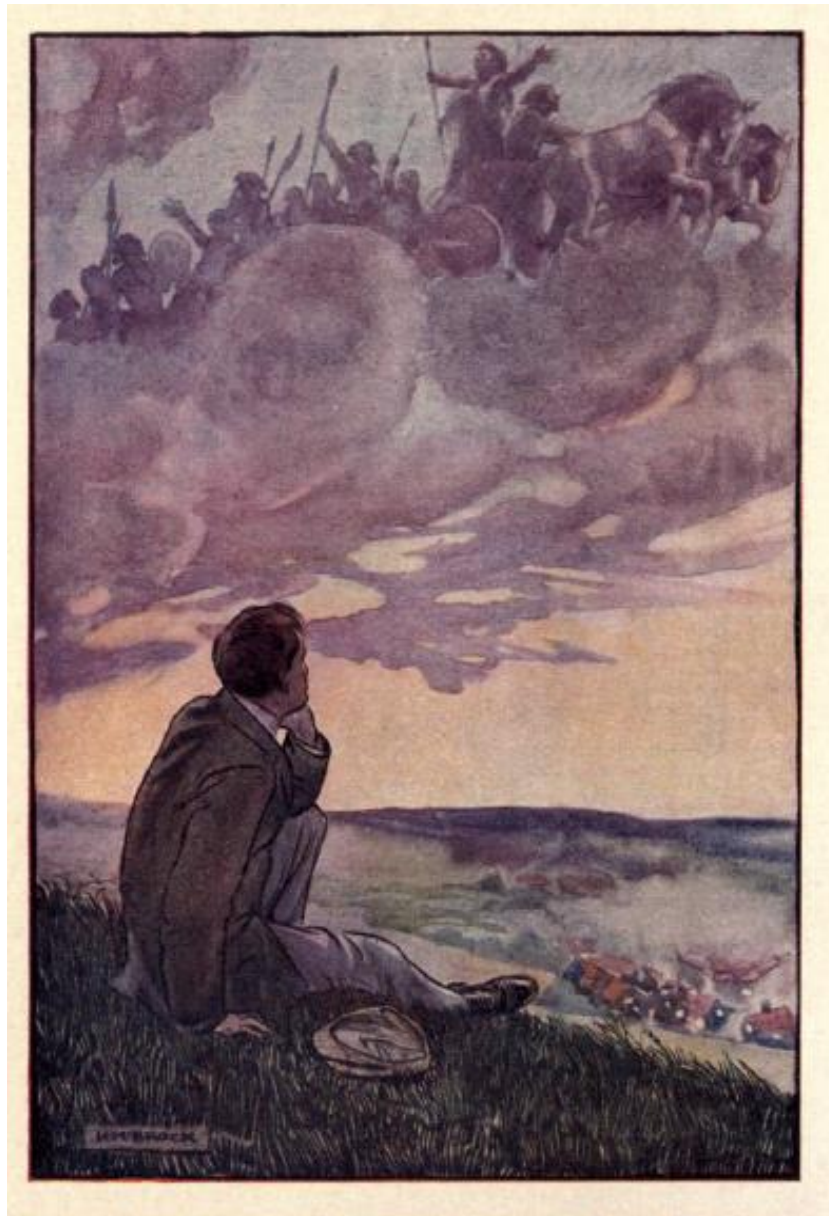


Figure 2.1 – H. M. Brock, ‘...That Queen of Ancient Britons...’, in A. J. Dawson, *The Message* (Boston MA: Dana Estes and Co., 1907), ii.

Henry Matthew Brock, book illustrator and artist, was the youngest son of Edmund Brock, an academic and reader at the Cambridge University Press. Brock’s elder brother Charles Edmund was also an artist, specialising in landscape painting. In a glowing biography of the Brock family, Clifford Kelly suggests the brothers “ranked with the very best” of late-Victorian and Edwardian illustrators (*The Brocks*, p. 10). Henry Brock certainly contributed to some noteworthy publications, including *The Last of the Mohicans* by James Fennimore Cooper. He also drew over 400 sketches for *Punch* magazine. In this scene, during which Dawson’s protagonist Mordan decides to actively resist the German occupation, the rural landscape is described as “British in every blade of its grass...root and crop, hill and dale, above and beneath”. Brock’s accompanying illustration of rolling fields with a village nestled in the valley certainly seems typical of the Edwardian rural idyll, an image, as Roy Strong has described it, that “draws its strength from tradition and heritage” and from a longing for the “pre-industrial world” (*Visions of England*, p. 147-152). The cloud of mist sitting over the houses draws the village into the spectacular cloud scene unfolding above, as if linking the present to the linear, unbreakable past. And distinct among her legions with her arms outstretched, Boadicea faces away from this rural scene, as if rousing the nation at large to follow her lead and resist.



These narratives both pay tribute to what might be called the assimilative quality of Britishness within Edwardian invasion literature. Perhaps the best example of this concept of assimilation is Rudyard Kipling's children's story *Puck of Pook's Hill* (1906). Set near the village of Burwash in rural Sussex, the work sees its child protagonists entertained by a series of imaginary visitors, including a Norman Knight, a Roman centurion, a thirteenth century Jewish physician, and Puck himself, "the oldest Old thing in England".<sup>49</sup> As each figure tells the children about their lives and experiences, English history is depicted, in Matin's view, "as a succession of invasions in which aggressors are either repelled or assimilated in such a way that would-be subjugators become 'subjugated' themselves."<sup>50</sup> The Norman knight Sir Richard Dalyngridge is one such assimilated invader, who fought with William the Conqueror before settling in England:

I followed my Duke ere I was a lover,

To take from England fief and fee;

But now this game is the other way over –

But now England hath taken me!<sup>51</sup>

Kipling's invaders all fall victim to "a mystically irresistible 'spirit of the land'", a quality tied as much to the Sussex hills as to England more broadly. National identity thus appears as much a product of geography and location as it does a matter of cultural experience. It is also represented as an independent and objective force, capable of endearing and converting outsiders.<sup>52</sup> Far from simply a "dramatised history lesson", *Puck of Pook's Hill* sees Kipling integrate "a sense of landscape with an understanding of the human forces that

<sup>49</sup> R. Kipling, *Puck of Pook's Hill*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. (London: MacMillan, 1924), p8.

<sup>50</sup> A. Michael Matin, "'The Hun is At The Gate!': Historicizing Kipling's Militaristic Rhetoric, from the Imperial Periphery to the National Center', 'The French, Russian, and German Threats to Great Britain, *Studies in the Novel*, 31.4 (1999), pp. 437-440.

<sup>51</sup> *Puck of Pook's Hill*, p. 63.

<sup>52</sup> Matin, "'The Hun is At The Gate!': Historicizing Kipling's Militaristic Rhetoric, from the Imperial Periphery to the National Center', 'The French, Russian, and German Threats to Great Britain, *Studies in the Novel*, p. 440.

shaped it”, suggesting that “Englishness was embedded here [in England] even before the English arrived.”<sup>53</sup>

Such appeals to antiquity in invasion literature, it should be noted, are not always harnessed in the positive manner of *Puck of Pook's Hill* and *The Message*. One illustrative example of this is Charles Doughty's epic poem *The Clouds* (1912). Doughty was a celebrated travel writer, whose work *Travels in Arabia Deserta* is considered a milestone in the western study of Arabian history, and through the influence of Arabic and old English syntactical forms on his writing style, a masterpiece of English prose. His poetic career in later life was, however, significantly less successful.<sup>54</sup> *The Clouds* was Doughty's second attempt, as Moon asserts, “to employ invasion as the subject for a blank verse patriotic saga”, following *The Cliffs* in 1909. Without explicitly naming the likely enemy, the work's ‘Proeme’ predicts that

A Péople of harsh speech, our Adversaries,  
Shall mount up glittering, from Thy blood-stained shore:  
And thence, like to vast folding Wave, begin  
To whelm on Thy fair Plain, O unready Britain!<sup>55</sup>

In delivering this warning, *The Clouds* makes multiple references to figures and images of antiquity and mythology. Quoting the Greek poets Kallinos and Tyrtaios, comparing Britain to Theseus and the enslaved citizens of Athens, and labelling the militarily untrained British populace “the new sons of Redeless Ethelred”, Doughty is generous in his unusual form of criticism.<sup>56</sup> Christened “the high priest of militant patriotism”, Doughty's critical vision of

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<sup>53</sup> Kemp, Mitchell, and Trotter, *Edwardian Fiction*, p. 328.

<sup>54</sup> S. E. Tabachnick, ‘Doughty, Charles Montagu (1843–1926)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32866> (accessed 4th March 2014).

<sup>55</sup> C. Doughty, *The Clouds*, (London: Duckworth and Co., 1912), pp. 3-4.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 85-6 and 1.

Britain, so thought the poetry correspondent of *The English Review*, “makes Mr. Kipling seem merely an irrelevant choir-boy”.<sup>57</sup>

When active (unlike in *The Clouds*), this assimilative concept of national identity did not only operate in a historical sense. While authors such as Kipling looked to the past, widening their definitions of Englishness to include historical invaders, other writers interpreted their contemporary world in a similar vein. The clearest instances of this trend within these narratives involved the representation of Anglo-American relations. The last decade of the nineteenth century was a formative period for the United States, in which industrial expansion, technological advance, and increasing international influence all but confirmed the nation’s status as an emerging great power. Moreover, in 1895 American intervention in a boundary dispute between Britain and Venezuela over British Guiana effectively signalled the end of British attempts to check US predominance in the Caribbean.<sup>58</sup> This grudging acceptance of America’s growing power has been presented by some historians as one illustration of Britain’s painful adjustment to its relative economic and imperial decline.<sup>59</sup> Yet in stressing historical ties of kinship and culture, many contemporary commentators tried to rationalise the rise of the US as a positive development for British political interests. On the outbreak of the Spanish-American War in 1898, W. T. Stead wrote that the world was witnessing “the evolution of a self-contained home-keeping people into a second edition of John Bull, with ships and colonies and trade all over the world.” Rather than representing a challenge, Stead saw America as Britain’s natural imperial successor, “As the English have been, the Americans are; and as we English did, so will these stout sons of ours do.”<sup>60</sup> The ideal, however, was integration over subjugation. Writing in the

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<sup>57</sup> ‘Poetry’, *The English Review*, 11 (June 1912), p. 502. For a detailed analysis of *The Cliffs* and *The Clouds* see C. D. Eby, *The Road to Armageddon: The Martial Spirit in English Popular Literature, 1870-1914* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1987), pp. 56-60.

<sup>58</sup> G. C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 299-309.

<sup>59</sup> A. L. Friedberg, *The Weary Titan, Britain and the Experience of Relative Decline, 1895-1905* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 162 and 186-190.

<sup>60</sup> R. Frankel, *Observing America: The Commentary of British Visitors to the United States, 1890-1950* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press 2007), p. 63.

*Review of Reviews* in 1891, Stead envisaged a near-future in which “all English speakers will be citizens of one great commonwealth, enjoying equally all rights, privileges, and protection without any question whether they are born in Melbourne, or Minnesota, or Manchester.”<sup>61</sup>

Stead’s vision was one expression of the late-Victorian ‘Greater Britain’ ideology. Coined by Charles Dilke in a book of the same name (1868), the term referred to an expansive understanding of British identity, in which the Imperial Dominions of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, and sometimes the United States, together formed the global nation of ‘Greater Britain’.<sup>62</sup> In *The Expansion of England* (1883), the historian J. R. Seeley compared the concept of ‘Greater Britain’ with the United States: “Here too is a great homogenous people, one in blood, language, religion and laws, but dispersed over a boundless space.”<sup>63</sup> Traditionally dismissed by historians as an intellectual concept of comparative insignificance, recent research has defended ‘Greater Britain’ as “an important economic and cultural reality”.<sup>64</sup> Real or otherwise, it is important to stress that this ideology was far from a static set of principles, and incorporated a range of conflicting ideas. Late-Victorian advocates of ‘Greater Britain’, as Duncan Bell has illustrated, included supporters of greater informal imperial integration, anti-Free Trade reformers campaigning for the establishment of a commercial *Zollverein*, and “utopian fantasists” seeking the creation of a politically and structurally unified empire.<sup>65</sup> In the Edwardian period the ideas of ‘Greater Britain’ became associated with campaign for economic reform led by Joseph Chamberlain and the Tariff Reform League, established in 1903. Calling for the creation of an imperial

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<sup>61</sup> ‘The Progress of the World’, *Review of Reviews*, 3.16 (1891), p. 319.

<sup>62</sup> Subtitled *a Record of Travel in English-speaking Countries During 1866 and 1867*, Dilke asserts that while “climate, soil, manners of life...[and] mixture with other peoples had modified the blood...in essentials the race was always one.” “If two small islands are by courtesy styled “Great””, Dilke continues, “America, Australia, India, must form a “Greater Britain” *Greater Britain* (London: Macmillan, 1868), vii.

<sup>63</sup> J. R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England: Two Courses of Lectures*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: MacMillan, 1897), p. 184.

<sup>64</sup> J. Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Angloworld* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 460.

<sup>65</sup> D. Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860-1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp. 18-20.

preference economic bloc, Chamberlain envisaged a “self-sustaining and self-sufficient [Empire], able to maintain itself against the competition of all its rivals”.<sup>66</sup>

Though a commonwealth of English-speaking nations remained an unlikely political prospect throughout the period, it was a popular theme in Edwardian invasion literature. Returning to Barnes’s vision of Anglo-American conflict *The Unpardonable War*, the ceasefire reached at the narrative’s end is described as a peace “for the nations who spoke the common tongue, whose blood was in each other’s veins.”<sup>67</sup> Such language of familial and cultural ties appears in the genre with regularity; Britons and Americans are often portrayed as “one and the same blood”, while Anglo-American alliances are “an assertion of blood-kinship”.<sup>68</sup> When an “Anglo-Saxon Federation” is established in George Griffith’s *The Angel of the Revolution* (1893), the new state is described by its first president as a unification of “the English-speaking races of the world, in virtue of their bonds of kindred blood and speech and common interests”. The president then appeals to his newly-established citizenry “to forget the artificial divisions that have separated them into hostile nations and communities” by embracing this trans-Atlantic creation.<sup>69</sup> An extensively travelled teacher, journalist and writer, Griffith was evidently attracted to these ideas of British and American unity. In his later work *The World Peril of 1910* (1907), Britain’s defence against German and Russian invasion is aided by aerial reinforcements from the US. When accepting a vote of thanks, the American air-admiral Hingeston asserts that though he may not be British by birth, “I have nothing but British blood in my veins, and therefore I am all the more glad that I am able to bring help to the motherland when she wants it”.<sup>70</sup> Such thinking transforms the US from potential rival into imperial asset, incorporating America into the informal folds of empire.

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<sup>66</sup> Quoted in S. H. Zebel, ‘Joseph Chamberlain and the Genesis of Tariff Reform’, *Journal of British Studies*, 7.1 (1967), p. 148.

<sup>67</sup> *The Unpardonable War*, p. 348.

<sup>68</sup> Anon., *Red England: A Tale of the Socialist Terror* (London: John Milne, 1909), p. 105, *The Message*, p. 364.

<sup>69</sup> G. Griffith, *The Angel of the Revolution: A Tale of the Coming Terror* (Westport CN: Hyperion, 1974), p. 281.

<sup>70</sup> G. Griffith, *The World Peril of 1910* (London: F. V. White and Co., 1907), p. 275.

At its broadest point, then, the national identity of Edwardian invasion literature is effectively all-encompassing. It is extraordinary flexible in nature, capable of reaching back into antiquity and across contemporary political boundaries. The Britishness expounded in many of these narratives is, as Grainger asserts of Edwardian Englishness, “assimilative rather than exclusive”, and rooted in a combination “of receptivity and expansiveness”.<sup>71</sup> This definition is particularly useful when approaching the literature’s representation of Britain’s minority nationalisms. The opening years of the twentieth century were a testing time for the British nation-state. In *Nationhood and Identity*, David Powell argues that the Edwardian period was shaped by a “crisis of nationalism”, during which the British state struggled to maintain its unity “in the face of the renewed disruption associated with domestic national discontents.”<sup>72</sup> The primary national discontent in question was the ongoing campaign for Irish Home Rule, a controversy that concerned the conflicting national identities of ‘Irish nationalism’ and ‘Ulster unionism’. Yet both Wales and Scotland experienced minor nationalist resurgences in the pre-war years, highlighted by organisations including the Young Scots Society and the Welsh National League, as well as in debates provoked by parliamentary issues such as the Welsh Disestablishment Bill.<sup>73</sup> Powell asserts that such movements, alongside other forces including industrialisation and democratisation, transformed the idea of Britishness from its unspoken, confident Victorian heights into a self-conscious, defensive, and at times reactionary sentiment.<sup>74</sup>

Such defensive attitudes are undoubtedly present within Edwardian invasion literature. It is worth emphasising, however, that minority nationalisms often contribute to the strength of Britishness in these narratives, rather than acting as a malignant force. This dynamic is best illustrated by the genre’s representation of ‘martial races’ theory, a concept that gained traction in the aftermath of the Indian Rebellion in 1857, and was harnessed by Lord Roberts during his time as Commander in Chief in India. Responding in part to

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<sup>71</sup> Grainger, *Patriotisms*, p. 54.

<sup>72</sup> Powell, *Nationhood and Identity*, p. 121.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 128-129.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

pragmatic changes in the recruitment practices of the Indian Army, the theory stressed that certain 'races', such as Nepalese Gurkhas and Punjabi Sikhs, were naturally suited to soldiering. Yet these ideas were not limited to colonial soldiers. Praised for their role in suppressing the 'Mutiny', the men of Highland regiments were lionised, in the words of Heather Streets, as "an image of ideal masculinity".<sup>75</sup> The Scottish soldiers of Edwardian invasion narratives are regularly celebrated in this manner as roguish but distinguished fighters, whose "wild blood" kept them "ready for any dare-devilry".<sup>76</sup> In *The Meteor Flag of England* (1908) by Gordon Stables, German troops rapidly become "heartsick of those savage bayonet charges of our linesmen and Highlanders, and the wild shrieks of the half-mad Irish, against whom their fire...seemed to have no effect".<sup>77</sup> Similarly, in *The German Invasion of England* (1910), a non-fictional study into the operational plausibility of invading Britain, Highland troops are described as "very unpleasant adversaries".<sup>78</sup> Though concentrated on men from the Celtic fringe, these martial qualities are generally represented as British characteristics. The perceived military prowess of Highlanders, therefore, acted as "shorthand for the racial capabilities of all British men".<sup>79</sup>

By the Edwardian period these inclusive representations of Britishness may already have appeared anachronistic. They seem to evoke, as D. G. Boyce suggests, an old-fashioned understanding of the United Kingdom as "a coat that fitted snugly and firmly over all the peoples who dwelt in the British Isles."<sup>80</sup> Yet there is an important distinction to be drawn between contemporary political attitudes towards a dysfunctional British state and understandings of national identity. As Eric Hobsbawm has argued, people did not 'choose' collective identification "as they chose shoes, knowing that one could only put one pair on at

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<sup>75</sup> H. Streets, *Martial Races: The Military, Race, and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 4 and 55-62. For a re-examination of 'martial races' theory and its inconsistent impact on Army recruitment practices see Rand and Wagner, 'Recruiting the 'Martial Races': Identities and Military Service in Colonial India, *Patterns of Prejudice*, pp. 232-254.

<sup>76</sup> *A New Trafalgar*, p. 31.

<sup>77</sup> G. Stables, *The Meteor Flag of England* (London: Nisbet, 1908), p. 271.

<sup>78</sup> 'A French Staff Officer', pseud., *The German Invasion of England* (London: David Nutt, 1910), p. 49.

<sup>79</sup> Streets, *Martial Races*, p. 10.

<sup>80</sup> D. G. Boyce, 'The Marginal Britons': The Irish', in R. Colls and P. Dodd, eds, *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880-1920* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), p. 231.

a time.”<sup>81</sup> It was thus perfectly possible for some Edwardians to be fierce Scottish patriots, or to support the cause of Irish nationalism, while continuing to identify with an abstract sense of Britishness. Perhaps the best example of the latter is the life of Erskine Childers. English by birth but brought up in County Wicklow, Childers converted to the campaign for Home Rule and ultimately to Irish republicanism, leading to his death at the hands of a Free State firing squad in 1922. Yet in a letter to his wife shortly before his execution he asserted, contrary to a recent denunciation from Winston Churchill, that he would die “loving England”, and hopeful that “she may change completely and finally towards Ireland”.<sup>82</sup> Childers clearly saw no contradiction between his loyalty to Britain (emphasised by the fear of German naval ambitions expressed in *The Riddle of the Sands*) and his pronounced sense of Irishness. One remarkable insight on these complimentary identities is Childers’s activity on the eve of war in 1914. Spearheading a gun-running episode in July during which 1500 German rifles were successfully delivered to the Irish Volunteers, within a matter of days Childers had volunteered for British service, took part in the Cuxhaven raid in November, and was demobbed in 1919 with a Distinguished Service Cross.<sup>83</sup> Despite the circumstances of his later life and death, Erskine Childers remained, in Roy Foster’s words, “[a] quintessential English adventure-hero”.<sup>84</sup>

These contradictions are not ignored by the authorship of invasion literature. Instead of rejecting minority nationalisms as a threat to British unity, such narratives often suggest a sense of strength in cultural diversity, and a faith in the power of British solidarity when required. Returning to *The Meteor Flag of England* by Gordon Stables (who, as discussed above, was himself a Scot), on hearing that the German invaders were to be engaged at Leith, one officer proudly asserts, “many of my best men are...Scotsmen. Just say ‘Britain

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<sup>81</sup> Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, p. 123.

<sup>82</sup> Quoted in N. Donaldson, ‘Introduction to the Dover Edition’, E. Childers, *Riddle of the Sands* (New York: Dover, 1976), p. 7.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>84</sup> R. F. Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch: Connections in Irish and English History* (London: Penguin, 1995), p. 303. Foster compares Childers, amongst others, to “the ‘superfluous men’ of late-nineteenth century Russia” as identified by Isaiah Berlin. Such men were “English Romantics”, who in Ireland “found the revolutionary identity, and revolutionary potential, so regrettably lacking in England”, p. 302-3.



expects'. They will understand...[and] fight all the fiercer for it."<sup>85</sup> Even when the difficult topic of Irish Home Rule was addressed, it was often not attacked outright but managed to fit a more palatable paradigm. Burying artificial differences, reinforcements would cross the Irish Sea, as in *The New Battle of Dorking* (1900), "leaving all impedimenta behind them".<sup>86</sup> Similarly, in *The Great Raid* (1910) by Lloyd Williams, the narrator records that upon German invasion of England, Ireland, "which some people have been pleased to describe as disloyal, was sending men by thousands across to Wales, who were enlisting eagerly".<sup>87</sup>

The treatment of Irish nationalism in Edwardian invasion literature, as such, is not one-dimensional. Though regularly demonised and ridiculed (as is explored in chapter four), other narratives take a more positive line, confidently predicting that in times of trouble Irish dissidents would rally around the British flag. One particularly contemptuous example of this occurs in Louis Tracy's *The Final War* (1896). Recording the minutes of a parliamentary debate upon French declaration of war, the narrative depicts Joseph Chamberlain delivering a warning to members of the Irish Parliamentary Party. This warning concerns French plans, attributed to the French senator Jean Antoine Constans, to provoke rebellion in Ireland and damage the British war effort. Bursting into furious action, one leading nationalist member descends to the floor of the House:

"Tell him if he dares to set his dirty foot in this country I'll fight him and his bottle-holders single-handed myself!"

So saying, he flung off his coat into the middle of the gangway and, to the amazement of all and the consternation of those near him, squared up his fists as if he were then and there desirous of tackling M. Constans".<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> *The Meteor Flag of England*, p. 83.

<sup>86</sup> F. N. Maude, *The New Battle of Dorking* (London: G. Richards, 1900), p. 104.

<sup>87</sup> L. Williams, *The Great Raid* (1910), in I. F. Clarke, ed, *British Future Fiction, Vol. 7: Disasters to Come* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2001), p. 385.

<sup>88</sup> L. Tracy, *The Final War* (London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1896), p. 24-25. Such scenes offer an interesting contrast to T. W. Offin's *How the Germans took London* (Chelmsford: E. Durrant and Co., 1900), where news of successful German landings is greeted in the Commons by "an outburst of cheering, and jeering laughter" from the Irish Nationalist benches, p. 8.

Agreeing to shelve their demands for self-government until the cessation of hostilities, the leader of the Irish members implores the House to remember that Ireland “was willing to make sacrifices at a time of peril.”<sup>89</sup>

Britain could hardly rely, however, on calls for Home Rule evaporating in the face of foreign invasion. Recognising this fact, several invasion narratives present Home Rule as a necessary step, strengthening Britishness through addressing the pitfalls of Britain’s constitutional structure. One such example is *The North Sea Bubble* (1906) by Ernest Oldmeadow, a work that additionally highlights the peculiar literary forms often taken by invasion narratives. Described by one contemporary review as “a skit on [Le Queux’s] *The Invasion of 1910*”, the novel is not quite so straightforward, as it suffers in Bleiler’s view “from the author’s reluctance to decide whether he is writing an imaginary war story, a burlesque, or an adventure story”.<sup>90</sup> While clearly satirical to a degree, in speculating on such matters as German military ambition and domestic political upheaval *The North Sea Bubble* is little different from standard works of Edwardian invasion literature.<sup>91</sup> Oldmeadow was perhaps a victim of circumstance, attempting to lampoon a genre which was, as John Ramsden has observed, “beyond parody”, in which ‘serious’ books had “hijacked the improbable, leaving no room for satirists”.<sup>92</sup> The work is one of the few set in Ireland, to which Parliament has evacuated following military defeat by Germany on the British mainland. Though initially presented as an ironic granting of Home Rule, Oldmeadow’s Ireland appears ready and

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<sup>89</sup> *The Final War*, p. 26.

<sup>90</sup> *The Athenaeum*, 4119 (6<sup>th</sup> October 1906), p. 405. Bleiler, *Science Fiction*, p. 571-2. *The Manchester Courier* described the work as “a good wholesome mixture of rollicking farce, gallant deeds, and a capital love story”, (16<sup>th</sup> November 1906), p. 9.

<sup>91</sup> One interesting feature of *The North Sea Bubble* is its use of verisimilitudinous references. Oldmeadow cites a range of imaginary sources, from memoirs to monographs, in an echo of the similar literary devices harnessed by Le Queux in *The Invasion of 1910*. Described by the *Athenaeum* as “some delicious footnotes”, the reviewer suggests that library subscribers unfamiliar with Le Queux’s work would most likely “set them down to abnormal stupidity on the part of the author”, 4119 (6<sup>th</sup> October 1906). Though not a common characteristic of Edwardian invasion literature, several other narratives utilise this unusual technique, including E. E. Mills, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire* (Oxford: Alden and Co., 1905) and G. R. Hall, *The Black Fortnight; or, The Invasion of 1915* (London: Swann Sonnenschein and Co., 1904).

<sup>92</sup> J. Ramsden, *Don’t Mention the War: the British and the Germans since 1890* (London: Little, Brown, 2006), p. 73.

willing to re-assert British power, now as an equal partner in a “union under one crown”.<sup>93</sup> As one member of the newly established Galway Parliament explains, though they may desire a measure of political independence, “Irishmen are not republicans”.<sup>94</sup> Successfully repelling the invader from the British Isles, political Britain emerges from defeat stronger than ever, having transformed her major internal threat into an asset.

Such a reading of Anglo-Irish relations was undoubtedly optimistic. Ireland may not have had a stringently defined or ideologically solid republicanism during the Edwardian years, but its political consciousness was immeasurably different from that of Oldmeadow’s representation. It is this willingness to transform matters of concern into more favourable representations that characterises the optimistic approach to British identity trod by many authors of invasion literature. The treatment of minority nationalisms within these narratives is in this sense comparable to the literature’s representation of class. Though the writers of Edwardian invasion literature were largely middle class by origin, they came from a range of social and occupational backgrounds.<sup>95</sup> Some of the more unusual examples include the prolific author and scriptwriter Edgar Wallace, the adopted son of a Billingsgate fish-porter, and the Lancastrian journalist Charles Clarke, whose parents were both factory workers in Bolton’s cotton industry.<sup>96</sup> At the opposite end of the social spectrum, the author of *The Battle of the North Sea* Sydney Eardley-Wilmot (1912) was a scion of the Warwickshire landed gentry, whose father Sir John Eardley-Wilmot was a second baronet.<sup>97</sup> The majority of the authorship, by contrast, emerged from less remarkable circumstances. Most were the

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<sup>93</sup> E. J. Oldmeadow, *The North Sea Bubble* (London: E. Grant Richards, 1906), p. 157.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> The use of the problematic category ‘middle class’ is guided in this thesis by Thompson’s work on occupational status in *The Edwardians*. Here the middle classes are a broad group sandwiched between the manual labouring working classes and the formally unoccupied aristocracy. Thompson divides this into several subgroups: higher professionals (such as doctors), lower professionals (teachers), employers, managers, foremen, and clerks, p. 7.

<sup>96</sup> D. Glover, ‘Wallace, (Richard Horatio) Edgar (1875–1932)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36703> (accessed 18th March 2014), T. Griffiths, ‘Clarke, (Charles) Allen (1863–1935)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/92482> (accessed 19th March 2014).

<sup>97</sup> R. J. Smith, ‘Wilmot, Sir John Eardley Eardley-, second baronet (1810–1892)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29626> (accessed 18th March 2014).

sons of academics, of Anglican and nonconformist clergymen, of barristers, Army officers, and a series of other typically middle class professions.

The authors *themselves* were arguably almost uniformly upper-middle class in status. This judgement is based on a series of factors. Firstly, of the seventy writers that make up this project's sample of invasion narratives, over a quarter were university educated. This includes several contributors who attended one of the national staff colleges, highlighted by the large number of Army officers within the authorship such as George Chesney and Guy du Maurier. Secondly, in terms of occupation, the writers were employed without exception in middle class professions. The largest of these occupational groups was, unsurprisingly, professional writers. This bracket itself encompasses a wide range of activity, as save for household names such as Le Queux and Wells, these men were not solely employed as authors. Several like Coulson Kernahan and Wilfred Newton were journalists, both contributing regularly to such periodicals and newspapers as *Fortnightly Review*, *The Spectator*, and the *New York Times*. Others were publishers (Edmund Downey), editors (A. J. Dawson, James Barnes), playwrights (Edgar Wallace, Henry Arthur Jones), and historians (Frederic Maude). Outside of the 'writers' group, other contributors enjoyed successful careers as diplomats (Bernard Townroe), barristers (John Dawson Mayne), and colonial administrators (Sir Frederick Guggisberg). Notable cases include Arthur Charles Fox-Davies, author of *The Sex Triumphant* (1909), who was a genealogist and expert in heraldry, and Allen Upward, who was at different times a writer, barrister, teacher, and even mercenary soldier.<sup>98</sup>

The authorship of Edwardian invasion literature, then, was populated by men of near-uniform social status. By extension, the treatment of social differences within these narratives was equally consistent, particularly in the regular portrayal of working class characters. When not presenting a revolutionary threat (a common feature of these

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<sup>98</sup> For Allen Upward see 'Mr Allen Upward', *The Times* (19<sup>th</sup> November 1926), p. 17, and D. Donald, 'The Mysterious Allen Upward', *American Scholar*, 59.1 (1990) pp. 53-65. For Arthur Charles Fox-Davies see 'Mr A. C. Fox-Davies, Expert in Pedigrees and Heraldry', *The Times* (21<sup>st</sup> May 1928), p. 22.

narratives analysed in chapter four), the British masses of this literature are brash, uncouth, and unrefined, yet unwavering in their devotion to home and empire. Typically presented as lowly soldiers, the British private, as in *The Unpardonable War*, is seen as “quite lovable in his simplicity”.<sup>99</sup> This simplicity extended to comical assessments of conflicts, invading motivations, and national characteristics. In *The New Battle of Dorking*, one soldier under the narrator’s command vents his irritation at the French decision to invade Britain: “Cheek I calls it comin’ over ‘ere. We ain’t no bloomin’ uncivilised nation as wants settin’ to rights”.<sup>100</sup> Another example saw the growing fear of German naval ambitions dismissed outright. As one typically forthright jack tar of *A New Trafalgar* outlines in his derisory assessment of the Kaiser’s expansionism, “We’re a-goin’ to give the German Emperor lessons in manners and the handlin’ o’ steam-yachts – that’s wot matey!”<sup>101</sup> The working class characters of these narratives consistently embody such values as bravery, strength, and uncompromising patriotism. An illustrative tangent in Le Queux’s *The Invasion of 1910* records a party of builders discovering several German agents among their number. “In the hands of these irate bricklayers”, as one might expect, “the Germans were given short shrift”.<sup>102</sup>

What these representations arguably identify is an authorial faith in a vertical national identity more powerful than class consciousness. For all the differences of social and cultural realities, the classes of Britain, as with the country’s numerous nationalisms, are often represented as firmly united in national and imperial faith. Though regularly evoked in the unsubtle manner demonstrated above, such faith in the loyalty of the mass populace was not entirely misplaced. Historians such as Ross McKibbin have argued that the Edwardian working class enjoyed an usually high level of cultural independence. Embodied in the contemporary popularity of the music hall, professionalised and codified team sports, and recreational drinking and gambling, this culture developed independently, without the

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<sup>99</sup> *The Unpardonable War*, p. 335.

<sup>100</sup> *The New Battle of Dorking*, p. 80.

<sup>101</sup> *A New Trafalgar*, p. 18.

<sup>102</sup> W. Le Queux, *The Invasion of 1910*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1906), p. 203.

“direction or tutelage” of broader British society.<sup>103</sup> The idea of national identity, or “the British ideology” as McKibbin describes it, was thus a concept that married two mutually exclusive cultures, ensuring “a high degree of social cohesion but not social integration.”<sup>104</sup> Developing this principle further, McKibbin suggests that British workers regularly drew distinction between “the ‘interests of labour’, which might be aggressively pursued, and a received idea of the nation which could be accepted more or less uncritically.”<sup>105</sup> This ‘received idea of nation’ closely resembles the sentiment voiced by many of the working class characters in Edwardian invasion literature. While often far removed as individuals from middle class conceptions of Britishness, such figures were, as in *When All Men Starve*, “loyal in the abstract” to an understanding of nation “expressed in and through its elite.”<sup>106</sup>

One of the defining features of national identity in the Edwardian period was the development of a new pastoralism, a resurgent sense of the rural idyll. Associated with agricultural depression, hardship, and cultural backwardness during the high-Victorian years of industrial and commercial success, this image of the countryside had begun to change by the end of the nineteenth century. In its place, as Tim Barringer explains, there emerged a new understanding of the nation “that favoured the rural and traditional rather than the urban and the modern”.<sup>107</sup> Roy Strong has identified this shift from urban to rural (something that contradicted the demographic trends of rural depopulation) as the birth of a new vision of Britain, in which “the nation’s old heartlands” were celebrated, and a sense of “the primeval timelessness of the landscape” was promoted.<sup>108</sup> The ascendancy of this vision is emphasised in contemporary invasion narratives. As with many features of this literature,

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<sup>103</sup> G. Searle, *A New England? Peace and War, 1886-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), p. 570.

<sup>104</sup> R. McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class: Social Relations in Britain, 1880-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 166.

<sup>105</sup> R. McKibbin, ‘Why was there no Marxism in Great Britain?’, *English Historical Review*, 99.391 (1984), p. 317.

<sup>106</sup> C. Gleig, *When All Men Starve* (London and New York: J. Lane, 1898), pp. 4-5. J. Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain, 1890-1960: Gender, Class and Ethnicity* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 171.

<sup>107</sup> T. Barringer, “‘There’s the life for a man like me’: Rural life and labour in Edwardian art and music”, in A. Trumble and A. Wolk Rager, eds, *Edwardian Opulence: British Art at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), p. 134.

<sup>108</sup> R. Strong, *Visions of England*, (London: Bodley Head, 2011), pp. 10 and 156.

the genre defining *The Battle of Dorking* (1871) presents a useful case in point. In an extended outline of the strategic advantages of the local geography, Chesney's narrator recalls being most impressed with the aesthetic beauty of the Surrey scene:

...the little town with the outline of the houses obscured by a blue mist, the massive crispness of the foliage, the outlines of the great trees, lighted up by the sun, and relieved by deep blue shade. So thick was the timber here, rising up the southern slopes of the valley, that it looked almost as if it might have been a primeval forest.<sup>109</sup>

The German troops on the other side of the valley, then, are not simply a threat to Britain's people and her political independence, but in an echo of *Puck of Pook's Hill*, are somehow challenging the land itself.

Chesney's depiction of the war-torn Surrey countryside is representative of a pre-1914 growth in what Peter Mandler describes as a "right wing nostalgia for a 'Merrie England'".<sup>110</sup> In a country whose modern history had been so shaped by industrialisation and urbanity, Edwardian ruralism sought solace in pastoral familiarity, distinct from the cold modernity of Victorian cities. Central to this "discovery of rural England", as Alun Howkins asserts, were "the ideals of continuity, of community or harmony, and above all else a special kind of classlessness".<sup>111</sup> All of these ideals appear with some regularity in Edwardian invasion literature. Consider the following passage from E. P. Oppenheim's espionage novel *The Secret*, in which the protagonist Hardross Courage describes his idyllic estate in the Ruritanian setting of Medchester:

It was a still, hot evening; the scene was perhaps as peaceful a one as a man could conceive. The tall elms stood out like painted trees upon a painted sky, the only movement in the quiet pastoral landscape was where a little string of farm labourers were trudging homeward across

<sup>109</sup> Chesney and 'Saki', *The Battle of Dorking and When William Came*, p. 23.

<sup>110</sup> P. Mandler, *The English National Character: The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 139.

<sup>111</sup> A. Hawkins, 'Discovery of Rural England', in Colls and Dodd, *Englishness – Politics and Culture*, p. 75.

the park...Beyond, the land sloped into a pleasant tree-encompassed hollow, and I could see the red-tiled roofs of the cottages, and the worn, grey spire of the village church.<sup>112</sup>

This scene is heavily shaped by continuity, through ancient elms, a traditional sense of social deference, and the comforting symbolism of the established Church. Courage observes the labourers in way that is both paternal and romantic, lionising agricultural workers in a manner reminiscent of trends emerging throughout Edwardian art, literature, and music.<sup>113</sup> The rugged village church, so typical of celebrated pastoral scenes, emphasises the indomitable spirit of oft-beleaguered Anglicanism. For Oppenheim and many of his fellow authors it was this rural portrait, rather than a modern cityscape, that typified English identity. This was the idyll threatened by foreign invasion; this was the England that many soldiers fought to defend in the First World War. Such men may have come from the urban sprawl of Edwardian cities, “yet they did not fight”, Strong argues, “for Manchester or Birmingham but for the likes of Chipping Camden and Lavenham.”<sup>114</sup>

The Britain of Edwardian invasion literature, as has been highlighted above, is arguably best approached in the plural, as a series of ‘Britains’. Produced by a largely English, upper-middle class authorship, such narratives conflate England, Britain, and the Empire, creating identities that are assumed without a process of definition, and accepted without concerted question. Despite regularly representing little more than an expanded (or bloated) Englishness, this sense of Britishness often enjoys an extraordinary flexibility and inclusiveness, able to incorporate seemingly contradictory nationalisms and class identities. Inherently ephemeral and ill-defined, these ‘Britains’ venerate symbols, settings, characteristics – any quality that conforms to an unspoken understanding of eternal, timeless, even primeval origins. Though these identities comprise, at times, a relatively consistent collection of national qualities or characteristics, it is clear that an undisputable, singular sense of Britishness does not exist within such literature. What can be said to exist,

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<sup>112</sup> *The Secret*, p. 76-77.

<sup>113</sup> Barringer, “‘There’s the life for a man like me’: Rural life and labour in Edwardian art and music’, in Trumble and Wolk Rager, eds, *Edwardian Opulence*, pp. 138-9.

<sup>114</sup> Strong, *Visions of England*, p. 10.



and in a sense unite these contrasting images of Britain, is an anxiety over British decline. The most overt attempts at defining the national character in invasion literature, to which this chapter will now turn, are oppositional. They highlight how British identity is threatened, or how decline has already destroyed a historical national precedent. Covering many of the socio-political flashpoints of the pre-war era, such critiques can be specific or vague, and terminal or recoverable. Crucially, they are united by a feeling of failure, that Edwardian Britain has failed to effectively maintain the standards of nationhood expected of her.

## 2.4 - The Threats to the Nation

Many of the anxieties associated with British national identity in Edwardian invasion literature are, in a sense, fears of invasion. While such narratives primarily speculate on the likelihood of a foreign military attack, fears over the impact of cultural, social, and economic invasions of Britain are equally prevalent. An illustrative example of this breadth of invasion anxieties was the furore that surrounded E. E. Williams's 1896 work *Made in Germany*. Williams was a journalist and barrister who trod a fluid political path, from membership of the Fabian Society to staunch protectionist, eventually accepting a seat on the executive of the Anti-Socialist Union.<sup>115</sup> Initially appearing as an anonymous series of articles in the *New Review*, Williams popularised the notion that Britain's relative industrial decline was thanks to foreign economic infiltration. Quoting a lengthy passage from the work, Petra Rau identifies *Made in Germany* as "indicative of the kind of alarmist polemic that meant to shake up complacent attitudes about British [economic] superiority":

Roam the house over, and the fateful mark will greet you at every turn, from the piano in your drawing-room to the mug on your kitchen dresser, blazoned though it be with the legend, A

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<sup>115</sup> W. E. Minchinton, 'Ernest Edwin Williams, A biographical memoir', in E. E. Williams, *Made in Germany* (Brighton: Harvester, 1973), xxxviii.

*Present from Margate*. Descend to your domestic depths, and you shall find your very drain-pipes German made.<sup>116</sup>

Through such a reading military invasion becomes unnecessary, as German export goods “have already burrowed into quotidian and cultural life.”<sup>117</sup> Not simply a protectionist attack on the folly of free trade principles, *Made in Germany* testified, in the words of a contemporary American review, “to the growing uneasiness that Englishmen feel lest their industrial supremacy be slipping from their grasp.”<sup>118</sup>

The arguments delivered by *Made in Germany* evidently struck a chord, as anxieties over German economic infiltration remained a lurking presence in the paranoid Edwardian mind. As late as 1909 the *Pall Mall Gazette* was able to print a cartoon entitled ‘An Englishman’s Home’ (responding to the success of Guy du Maurier’s play of the same name) in which both the householder’s furniture and his dinner have been imported, including a table cloth from Saxony, a German teapot, and a German piano.<sup>119</sup> Several years earlier in 1906 E. J. Oldmeadow’s *The North Sea Bubble* made extended reference to German commercial infiltration. One of the more overt elements of satire in this unusual narrative involves the character Fleischmann, leader of a rebellious fifth column of immigrant Germans fighting *against* the German invaders. As the narrator explains, “the German waiters and clerks who have migrated to this country in years past, in order to evade military service at home, are determined not to fall into the hands of the Kaiser’s judges and gaolers without a struggle.”<sup>120</sup> Nevertheless, the renegade Fleischmann does not shy away from criticism of his benevolent host nation, particularly regarding the hypocritical commercial behaviour of the British populace:

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<sup>116</sup> Rau, *English Modernism, National Identity and the Germans*, p. 2, Williams, *Made in Germany*, p. 11.

<sup>117</sup> Rau, *English Modernism, National Identity and the Germans*, p. 3.

<sup>118</sup> H. R. Seager, ‘E. E. Williams, *Made in Germany*’, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 8 (1896), p121.

<sup>119</sup> Reproduced in the *Manchester Courier* (8<sup>th</sup> February 1909), p. 7.

<sup>120</sup> *North Sea Bubble*, p. 92.

An Englishman wants an axe or a lamp or a frying-pan. He sees a good English one for three shillings and a worse German one for half-a-crown. He saves the sixpence. The same night he meets his friends, and complains bitterly that everything is made in Germany...Are not you English both fools and brutes?<sup>121</sup>

Through the unusual form of a vigilante German barber, Oldmeadow makes a compelling 'supply and demand' point, that German goods were flooding British markets because British consumers were willing to buy them. To be truly British one had to buy British, choosing national interest over the personal and patriotic value over the commercial.

A second 'invasion' that caused much concern during the Edwardian period was that of foreign immigration. Though primarily a land of transmigration, in that British ports facilitated mass-migration from Europe to the United States, immigration to Britain was steadily rising in the pre-1914 period. A significant minority of these migrants were Jews from Eastern Europe, fleeing in response to the periodic pogroms and anti-Jewish violence of Imperial Russia.<sup>122</sup> Combining with the late-Victorian fears of political radicalism and anarchistic terrorism represented in novels such as *The Angel of the Revolution* by George Griffith and E. D. Fawcett's *Hartmann the Anarchist* (1892), the early Edwardian years saw Britain's liberal asylum traditions come under concerted attack. Emerging in their place was 'the Alien Question', a fractious debate inherently tied to a growing anti-Semitic lobby, in which Britain's 'alien' population were identified as a threat to political security and understandings of national identity. Culminating in a parliamentary sense with the Aliens Act of 1905, "the first recognisably modern law that sought permanently to restrict immigration into Britain", the tenor of the debate surrounding this controversial act was, in David Glover's view, "indicative of an insular turn in Edwardian culture".<sup>123</sup> Speaking in the Commons in the final debate before the Aliens Bill was ratified, the then Prime Minister Arthur Balfour voiced

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 126-7.

<sup>122</sup> For estimated immigration figures see B. Gainer, *The Alien Invasion: The Origins of the Aliens Act of 1905* (New York: Crane, 1972), pp. 2-3.

<sup>123</sup> D. Glover, *Literature, Immigration and Diaspora in Fin-de-Siècle England: A Cultural History of the 1905 Aliens Act* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 143.

his fear that unchecked immigration could create “a new nationality”, one that “would not be the nationality we should desire to be our heirs through the ages yet to come.”<sup>124</sup>

These anxieties surrounding immigration and national identity, though a common feature of Edwardian invasion literature, are difficult to thematically isolate. One typical expression of anti-immigration sentiment was the depiction of political radicalism as a foreign phenomenon, slowly damaging British moderation and constitutionalism. The revolutionaries of the anonymous work *Red England* (1909), for example, are variously described as “Russian refugees and other scoundrelly anarchists”, “evil-looking foreigners”, and as “foreign anarchists and criminals”. The British men involved in the revolution, by contrast, are “decent, if deluded, men”.<sup>125</sup> In a similar vein (and similarly named), Coulson Kernahan’s *The Red Peril* (1908) envisages a plot to bomb “giddy, fashionable Brighton”, masterminded by a quartet of “Nihilist, Anarchist” terrorists, made up of the Polish Vinski, the Germans Heinz and Schwynter, and an American Jew named Boker.<sup>126</sup> Though the hero Arthur Maxwell manages to avert this terrorist outrage, Kernahan leaves the impression that the country is riddled with foreign political extremists. The Britain of invasion literature is often described as “a dumping-down to the beggars and felons of all nations”,<sup>127</sup> where, in the words of the appropriately inflexible John Steel of *The Enemy in our Midst*, “we’ve given a welcome to every bit of foreign scum that’s too filthy to be kept in its own country!”<sup>128</sup> Though distorted and sensationalised, such visions were not entirely divorced from the reality of Edwardian politicised violence. Episodes including the ‘Tottenham Outrage’ of 1909, a fatal armed robbery involving two Russian immigrants, and the infamous ‘Siege of Sidney Street’ early in the following year, both suggested that London was developing an increasingly volatile political climate. While little evidence was produced to sustain

<sup>124</sup> *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)* (House of Commons), 4<sup>th</sup> ser., 145, cols. 795-796 (2nd May 1905).

<sup>125</sup> *Red England*, pp. 33, 98, and 100.

<sup>126</sup> C. Kernahan, *The Red Peril* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1908), p. 49. This quartet is clearly reminiscent of Mr Verloc, Michaelis, Karl Yundt, and Comrade Ossipon, the revolutionaries of Conrad’s *The Secret Agent*, first published the previous year in 1907.

<sup>127</sup> *The Meteor Flag of England*, p. 167.

<sup>128</sup> *The Enemy in our Midst*, p. 7.

accusations that those involved were anarchists, Glover highlights that anarchism “provided a rhetorical frame” for the two events.<sup>129</sup> By portraying such disturbances as anarchistic in nature, the police, the press, and politicians simultaneously attempted to present these events as anathema to Britain and Britishness.<sup>130</sup>

The immigrant in these narratives, however, was not always a political radical or anarchist. An equally common figure was that of the foreign spy. Anxieties over foreign espionage were prominent in late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain. Those who subscribed to such ideas believed that foreign residents in Britain, usually Germans, were part of a sophisticated system of intelligence gathering, preparing the ground for a foreign invasion of Britain. These fears reached a peak during the nervous year of 1909, highlighted by claims from Lord Roberts that 80,000 trained German soldiers resided in the United Kingdom, and the Liberal MP Sir John Barlow’s statement in Parliament that “in a cellar within a quarter of a mile of Charing Cross, 50,000 stands of Mauser rifles” awaited their German operators.<sup>131</sup> The actual status of German espionage in Britain, however, was some distance from these alarmist estimates, described by Panikos Panayi as “a disorganised and underfunded muddle.”<sup>132</sup> This is illustrated in particular by the counter espionage action of the Secret Service following the declaration of war. Of the 200 suspects that formed the “Special War

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<sup>129</sup> Glover, *Literature, Immigration and Diaspora in Fin-de-Siècle England*, p. 185.

<sup>130</sup> The coverage of ‘The Siege of Sidney Street’ in the *Daily Mail* provides a good example of this ‘rhetorical frame’. Naming one of the two bodies discovered following the siege as that of Peter Svaars, the paper reported that Svaars “was regarded as one of the ringleaders – if not, in fact, the real leader – of the gang of housebreaking Anarchists”, ‘Battle with Aliens in a London Street’ (4<sup>th</sup> January 1911), p. 4. In an opinion piece on the same page, one writer called for “the foreign Anarchist and criminal” to be excluded from Britain, and stressed that “the ordinary British criminal is rarely or never a wanton murderer or a bloodthirsty miscreant”, ‘The Battle with the Alien Murderers’ (4<sup>th</sup> January 1911), p. 4. No firm evidence was or has ever been produced that either the ‘Tottenham Outrage’ or the ‘Siege of Sidney Street’ was the work of anarchists. For more on the latter see D. Rumbelow, *The Houndsditch Murders and the Siege of Sidney Street* (London: MacMillan, 1973).

<sup>131</sup> P. Panayi, *The Enemy in our Midst: Germans in Britain during the First World War* (Providence and Oxford: Berg, 1991), pp. 9-41.

<sup>132</sup> Panayi, *The Enemy in our Midst*, p. 39. In *Secret Service: The Making of the British Intelligence Community* (London: Heinemann, 1985), Christopher Andrew argues that pre-war German spies in Britain were “concerned almost exclusively with naval espionage”, while German military intelligence “had no spy network at all in pre-war Britain, and no plans for wartime sabotage”, p. 54.

List", an anti-espionage document compiled by the future head of MI5 Vernon Kell, only eight were arrested in August 1914.<sup>133</sup>

I. F. Clarke has identified this gulf between the fear of German spies and the unspectacular reality as an example of "the state of widespread alarm that produced the tale of invasion".<sup>134</sup> Yet invasion literature had undoubtedly created, or at the very least augmented, much of this alarm itself. Many of the genre's major contributors wrote narratives in which enemy espionage played a significant part. This was especially true of the prolific William Le Queux. His early novel *The Great War in England* hinges on the activities of Count Von Beilstein (see *Figure 2.2*), German subject and Russian agent, whose infiltration of the Foreign Office is nearly fatal to Britain's war effort.<sup>135</sup> The later work *Spies of the Kaiser* expands such themes to the point of absurdity. Britain is teeming with spies, taking the form of German waiters, publicans, tourists, and poorly disguised Army officers, all of whom are plotting against England each in a way more elaborate than the last. Despite the evident presence of enemy espionage, such threats are "poo-pooed by both the Prime Minister and the Minister for War", to the fury of Le Queux's protagonists.<sup>136</sup> Underhand and deceptive by nature, espionage was regularly criticised in Edwardian Britain for running counter to the strong national sense of 'fair-play'. Yet such attitudes, in the view of many invasion literature authors, served to mask the threat posed by foreign spies. Consider this warning from F. S. Brereton's protagonist in *The Great Aeroplane* (1911):

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<sup>133</sup> These figures are the subject of significant disagreement. This dispute is based on what has been described as the "foundation myth" of MI5, that 21 German agents were arrested on the outbreak of war in a coup for Britain's fledgling secret services. This line was reiterated in Christopher Andrew's authorised history of MI5 published in 2009, despite widespread criticism. See T. Boghardt, *Spies of the Kaiser: German Covert Operations in Great Britain during the First World War Era* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), pp. 77-80, N. Hiley, 'Entering the Lists: MI5's great spy round-up of August 1914', *Intelligence and National Security*, 21.1 (2006), pp. 46-76, C. Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm: the Authorised History of Mi5* (London: Penguin, 2009), pp. 883-885, fn. 112, N. Hiley, 'Re-Entering the Lists: MI5's Authorized History and the August 1914 Arrests', *Intelligence and National Security*, 25.4 (2010), pp. 415-452. For the figures cited above see 'Re-Entering the Lists', p. 416.

<sup>134</sup> I. F. Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War: Future Wars 1763-3749* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 128.

<sup>135</sup> W. Le Queux, *The Great War in England in 1897* (London: Tower Publishing Co., 1894), p. 28-34.

<sup>136</sup> W. Le Queux, *Spies of the Kaiser* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1909), p. 4.



Figure 2.2 - T. S. Crowther, 'Count Von Beilstein Was a Spy!', in W. Le Queux, *The Great War in England in 1897* (London: Tower Publishing Co., 1894), p. 29. T. S. C. Crowther was an illustrator who regularly contributed to a range of periodicals and newspapers during the 1890s, including *The Graphic* and *The English Illustrated Magazine*. His work is "characterised by a very thin pen line" (Houfe, *Dictionary of British Book Illustrations and Caricaturists*, p.273). Crowther was one of two illustrators to contribute to *The Great War in England*. The other was Captain Cyril Field, who provided the illustrations of naval engagement. These sepia images are far more typical of Edwardian invasion narratives than Brock's colourful illustrations. Crowther's depiction of Count von Beilstein nicely captures the villain of the piece, described by C. D. Eby as "a suave German Jew", who agrees to spy for the Russians in an effort to allay significant gambling debts (*Road to Armageddon*, p. 26). Smoking confidently, smartly dressed and immaculately coiffured, von Beilstein's stern countenance and elaborate moustache are characteristic of German stereotypes in late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain.

...we seem to imagine that because we are so open and above-board with our things spies do not visit us; but they do. Foreigners know this England of ours even better than we do...they have the whole of the country mapped...they know the ports as well as our own pilots...<sup>137</sup>

Underlying this treatment of anarchism and espionage as ‘foreign’ within invasion literature was a pronounced level of anti-Semitism. The prevalent concern in these narratives was that Jews represented, as Gisela Lebzelter explains, “a disintegrating element in the national life”, thus threatening “the racial and cultural purity of their host societies”.<sup>138</sup> Unlike the acceptable cultural differences and class distinctions outlined above, Jewish identity is something that authors struggle to incorporate into their relatively flexible understanding of Britishness. Instead, the Jews of invasion literature are outsiders, both as individual characters and as an abstract collective. In *When William Came* Jewish Britons are among the first to collaborate with the German invaders, being in the view of one character “far more Teuton or Polish or Latin than they were British”.<sup>139</sup> This complex, multi-layered sense of Jewish identity is regularly utilised by such narratives. One character who sneeringly predicts British defeat in *A New Trafalgar* is described as “an Americanised German Jew”.<sup>140</sup> Lambasting the power and influence of international finance (an idea that was conspiratorially associated with the outbreak of the South African War) George Hall’s *The Black Fortnight* identified these faceless capitalists as “Germans and other Jews”, as if the two categories were synonymous.<sup>141</sup> Anti-Semitic rhetoric of this sort enjoyed a social duality, in that the demonised Jew was both the reprehensible capitalist financier and the degenerate foreign reprobate. While *The Death Trap* sees Britain sold to the Kaiser “by a

<sup>137</sup> F. S. Brereton, *The Great Aeroplane* (London: Blackie and Son, 1911), pp. 40-41.

<sup>138</sup> G. Lebzelter, ‘Anti-Semitism – A Focal Point for the British Radical Right’, in P. Kennedy and A. Nicholls, eds, *Nationalist and Racist Movements in Britain and Germany before 1914* (London and Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1981), p. 92.

<sup>139</sup> Chesney and ‘Saki’, *The Battle of Dorking and When William Came*, p. 72.

<sup>140</sup> *A New Trafalgar*, p. 271.

<sup>141</sup> *The Black Fortnight*, p. 22.



gang of Jews which had the government in its power”,<sup>142</sup> the socialistic *Starved into Surrender* paints a near-future of mass native unemployment, where “Alien Jews have completely driven all English workers out”.<sup>143</sup> Whether German or Polish, rich or poor, anarchist or capitalist, this broad group of undesirables were ‘Jewish’ before any other identity, and fundamentally foreign as a result.

The ‘Alien’ of Edwardian invasion literature, then, could be a political radical, an enemy agent, or a Jewish undesirable. Yet confusingly, aliens often represented all of these qualities simultaneously. One novel that provides a case in point of this tendency is James Blyth’s 1910 work *Ichabod*. As Glover highlights in his extended analysis of Blyth’s narrative, the biblical illusion of the title illustrates how *Ichabod* differed from the wider body of invasion literature. Taken from the name of the child born on the day the ark of the covenant was captured by the Philistines, ‘Ichabod’ denotes a sense of shame and loss.<sup>144</sup> Blyth’s use of the name is a lament for Britain’s slow destruction at the hands of Jewish immigration. The story follows the Pettigrew family, bakers from the East End who have become destitute, ruined by the effective denationalisation of London “east of Bishopsgate”. Britain is not only threatened in cultural and demographic terms, however, as *Ichabod* is bookended by German invasion plots, both of which rely on Jewish immigrant fifth columns. The first plot is uncovered by John Pettigrew, who is subsequently murdered by a disgruntled Jewish conspirator. Taking up his father’s mantle, Noel Pettigrew is able to foil the second invasion scheme set in the near-future of 1924. Put through university by an Army Officer foster father, the scientific prodigy Noel discovers the mind-control power of “Hertzian waves”. This discovery allows him not only to counter nefarious German military and naval intentions, but to force the passage of a second Aliens Act through the Commons.

<sup>142</sup> R. W. Cole, *The Death Trap* (1907), in Clarke, ed, *British Future Fiction, Vol. 7: Disasters to Come*, p. 134.

<sup>143</sup> C. A. Clarke, *Starved into Surrender* (London: C. W. Daniel, 1904), p. 89. This is a point Paul Knepper makes strongly in his article ‘The Other Invisible Hand: Jews and Anarchists in London Before the First World War’, *Jewish History*, 22 (2008). In Edwardian London, Knepper argues, “The invisible hand of the market, and the invisible hand of anarchism, were attached to a Jewish body”, p. 311.

<sup>144</sup> Glover, *Literature, Immigration and Diaspora in Fin-de-Siècle England*, p. 191.

Expelling Britain's Jewish population in its entirety, this Act is heralded by Blyth as the legislation "which cleansed England...from the blight that had fallen upon her."<sup>145</sup>

What distinguishes the anti-Semitism of *Ichabod* from that of invasion literature more broadly is its stark centrality. The novel does not confine itself to abstract criticism of Jewish immigration, nor does it focus on the plots and intrigues of individual Jewish characters. Blyth's anti-Semitism is conspiratorial in nature, based on the belief that Jews represented as grave a threat to British security as foreign military invasion. In one illustrative passage, Noel complains to a university colleague that the Government was clearly unconcerned by the idea of British racial interests, "or it would never consent to see its country made the dumping-ground for alien poverty, alien filth, alien dishonesty, and alien disease."<sup>146</sup> The irrationality of this prejudice is captured in Blyth's visceral and extraordinarily derogatory use of language, including reference to "filthy Semitic aliens" and barbed allusion to "the foul garbage which besmirched our land".<sup>147</sup> Drawing a distinct link with the growth of right wing extremism in pre-1914 British politics, Glover argues that *Ichabod* sketched out "an emergent political myth for the Edwardian Radical Right", shaping an ideology "committed to a violent clarification of the struggles ahead."<sup>148</sup> Blyth's understanding of national identity was thus as political as it was ethnic and racial. The Jewish characters in *Ichabod* are not simply racially distinct: they are German sympathisers; enemy agents; anarchists; plutocrats; all manner of men that did not fit the author's narrow definition of Britishness. It is only through radical upheaval and personal suffering, namely the expulsion of Britain's Jewish population and Noel's sacrificial death during the destruction of the German fleet, that British national identity is secured.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> J. Blyth, *Ichabod* (London: John Milne, 1910), p. 294.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4 and 18.

<sup>148</sup> Glover, *Literature, Immigration and Diaspora in Fin-de-Siècle England*, p. 195. This 'political myth' echoes Dan Stone's use of the phrase "extremes of Englishness" in *Breeding Superman: Nietzsche, Race and Eugenics in Edwardian and Interwar Britain* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002), p. 3.

<sup>149</sup> The root of Blyth's strong anti-Semitism is difficult to assess. It was certainly a theme common to his four works of invasion literature, appearing in varying levels of intensity in *The Tyranny* (London: William

The example of *Ichabod* further illustrates the varied visions of Britishness represented in Edwardian invasion literature. Peter Mandler has described national identity as a large repository of shifting, competing and sometimes conflicting qualities, reflecting “its exponents’ current beliefs, anxieties, self-understandings and prejudices”.<sup>150</sup> Blyth’s ‘political myth’ of bloodletting leading to national rebirth may have reflected his own anxieties and prejudices, then, but not all authors of invasion literature shared his radical understanding of national identity. In *The War in the Air*, H. G. Wells is highly critical of what he terms “the modernisations of patriotism”. Describing legitimate patriotism as “a pride in one’s own atmosphere, a tenderness for one’s Mother speech and one’s familiar land”, Wells saw these implicit emotions as “a fine factor in the equipment of every worthy human being”. Yet with the onset of industrialisation, the pace of life had quickened and the rate of change intensified. Such transformations had a highly damaging effect on Wells’s moderate form of national identity:

All the old settled mental habits and traditions of men found themselves not simply confronted by new conditions, but by constantly renewed and changing conditions. They had no chance of adapting themselves. They were annihilated or perverted or inflamed beyond recognition.<sup>151</sup>

James Blyth and H. G. Wells thus offer opposite assessments of the future of Edwardian national identity. Blyth’s call for a violent reassertion of British rights and drive for racial uniformity is arguably precisely the sort of rhetoric Wells feared, as a perversion of restrained and implicit patriotism.

If *Ichabod* preaches radical action and *The War in the Air* calls for restraint, the majority of pre-1914 invasion narratives offer less clarity in their diagnoses and solutions

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Heinemann, 1907), *The Swoop of the Vulture* (London: Digby Long and Co., 1909), and *The Peril of Pines Place*. On a personal level, Blyth appears to have suffered from significant social and familial problems. His first wife divorced him in 1896 on the grounds of violent behaviour, persistent alcohol abuse, and adultery. In 1898 he changed his name to James Blyth by deed poll, having been originally named Henry James Catling Clabburn. See N. Rance, ‘The Great Aunt and the Novelist’, unpublished essay, supplied by C. Self (2013).

<sup>150</sup> Mandler, *The English National Character*, p. 2.

<sup>151</sup> H. G. Wells, *The War in the Air* (New York: Boni and Liveright, inc., 1917), pp. 97-8.

concerning British national identity. One recurring anxiety in the literature is the idea that 'national spirit' is in terminal decline, that there has developed in Britain "[a] selfish irresponsibility and repudiation of national obligations".<sup>152</sup> This theme is often portrayed through critical representations of upper-class decadence, as with Mr Littleport in *When England Slept* (1909) by Henry Curties. An ostentatious member of the Edwardian *nouveau riche*, Littleport remains unmoved by the narrative's unfolding German invasion, for it is a matter "which did not concern him materially."<sup>153</sup> The only passage of dialogue awarded to this bit-part character emphasises his contemptible disinterestedness in the invasion crisis. A keen philatelist, Littleport excitedly emerges from his study, interrupting a family discussion on the progress of the resistance, to announce he has successfully secured the final piece in a rare collection of stamps. "To have a complete issue under such circumstances", they are assured, "is almost worth suffering an invasion for."<sup>154</sup> Though not exactly an undermining force or hindrance to the British war effort, Littleport is the embodiment of a useless and effete upper class gentleman. He forms part of a class that C. F. G. Masterman's referred to in *The Condition of England* (1909) as "The Conquerors", an elite minority that dominated the nation "with a certain serene confidence in the justice of their supremacy".<sup>155</sup> Such confidence had clearly led, in the view of Curties, to a self-assured detachment from the nation at large.

Britain's social elite, by the Edwardian period part aristocratic and part-plutocratic, was not peopled entirely by such disinterested and detached characters. A significant proportion of Britain's political class, after all, came from a background of vested privilege, including such figures as Winston Churchill, Arthur Balfour, and Sir Edward Grey. Yet in an age of stationary real wages for the majority of Edwardian workers, the spending habits of the very wealthy minority regularly came under fire. The sinking of the White Star liner Titanic in April 1912 provoked a series of such criticisms, particularly regarding the higher

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<sup>152</sup> *The Message*, p. 154.

<sup>153</sup> H. Curties, *When England Slept* (London: Everett and Co., 1909), p. 33.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>155</sup> C. F. G. Masterman, *The Condition of England* (London: Shenvall Press, 1960), p. 46

survival rate of first class passengers and the vessel's unnecessarily extravagant design. Described by the *Manchester Guardian* shortly after setting sail as a ship designed for "cosmopolitan millionaires", the sinking was lamented in *The Times* as the tragic consequence of commercial considerations. Rather than built for safety or efficiency, the Titanic was a victim of its own "lavish and unbridled luxury".<sup>156</sup> This type of social critique was equally apparent in Edwardian invasion literature. Such narratives are highly critical of 'Society', described by *When All Men Starve* as the elitist socialising of "Genteel idlers...lacking brains for mental and muscles for physical labour".<sup>157</sup> In the epilogue of *The Sack of London*, a work that envisages both Franco-Russian invasion and mass social unrest, the anonymous author speaks of the pressing need to "purge ourselves of the selfishness of our social life".<sup>158</sup> Britain's decadent social elites are here a danger to national security in an internal and external sense, fostering not only class antagonism but foreign military ambition.

One interesting example this social decadence anxiety is *The Green Curve* by Ernest Swinton, first published in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1907. Then an army major and instructor in fortification and geometrical drawing at the Royal Military Academy in Woolwich, Swinton is now renowned for his role in the development of armoured military vehicles during the First World War, personally coining the euphemistic term 'tank'.<sup>159</sup> A writer as well as a soldier, *The Green Curve* was the latest in a series of militarily-themed short stories penned by Swinton. It focuses on the brutal efficiency of a modern siege, and explores how starvation remained "one of the weapons of the besieger."<sup>160</sup> Set in an unnamed country that bears passing cultural resemblance to Britain, invaded by an unnamed aggressor, the

<sup>156</sup> 'The Titanic', *Manchester Guardian* (11<sup>th</sup> April 1912), p. 6, 'The Loss of the Titanic', *The Times* (17<sup>th</sup> April 1912), p. 9. See also D. Read, *Edwardian England 1901-1915, Society and Politics* (London: Harrap, 1972), pp. 47-48.

<sup>157</sup> *When All Men Starve*, pp. 130-131.

<sup>158</sup> Anon., *The Sack of London in the Great French War of 1901* (London: F. V. White and Co., 1901), p. 119.

<sup>159</sup> K. Grieves, 'Swinton, Sir Ernest Dunlop (1868-1951)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36392?docPos=5> (accessed 19th March 2014). See also E. D. Swinton's autobiography *Over My Shoulder* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1951).

<sup>160</sup> E. Swinton, *The Green Curve* (1907), in I. F. Clarke, ed, *The Tale of the Next Great War, 1871-1914* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995), p. 212.

plot forms around the unenviable decisions facing 'The Butcher', a hardened general and national military hero. Commanding a besieged coastal fortress for which the Government had failed to stockpile the necessary provisions, the General is forced to decide whether his limited rations should cater for soldiers alone or should be stretched to include "*les bouches inutiles*".<sup>161</sup> He is presented with a chart by one of his advisors, a line diagram with a number of 'curves' representing different processes of food distribution. Only the eponymous "Green Curve" will ensure rations last until the earliest date fresh supplies can arrive, yet it involves "refusing to feed the useless members of the populations, or, in other words...turning them out to freeze and starve".<sup>162</sup> Torn between conscience and duty, the General eventually chooses to risk starvation and defeat by continuing to feed the fortress's civilian populace.

The short story ends in an upmarket restaurant in the nation's capital. Frequented by the city's "Sybarites", who dine in an atmosphere "of protection and refined luxury", the scene was described by a review in *The Athenaeum* as evoking "an animus against government by civilians".<sup>163</sup> In these opulent surroundings, the assembled civilians have met the war's various setbacks by directing "savage and ignorant criticism...at the army and its generals". Discussing the as yet unknown fate of the siege, one bespectacled man ironically accuses soldiers of being decadent as he eats peaches and smokes a cigar, asserting "our army is too luxurious – wants too much – our soldiers are too soft". A similarly critical table companion is colourfully depicted as "a fair specimen of the gilded youth of the nation", whose oiled long hair and prominent front teeth "suggested a rodent which had eaten its way through a keg of butter". Their meal is eventually interrupted by what all the guests have been craving, news from the front. Unfortunately the news is not good, as the evening paper

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid., p. 213.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., p. 218.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., p. 229, 'Short Stories', *The Athenaeum* (19<sup>th</sup> June 1909), p. 727. This is a review of *The Green Curve and other Stories* (Edinburgh and London: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1909), a collection of Swinton's work published under the pseudonym of 'Ole Luk-Oie', not the original publication in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1907.

reports details of an unsuccessful sortie, and the surrender of the starved fortress by the critically wounded General:

The rooms were now filled with exclamations, shouts, and event oaths; many were cursing The Butcher...[as] the dejected revellers began to disperse.

The man with the glasses sat on, fingering his glass of *crème de menthe*. Again he panted, 'If it had been any other I should not have backed him. Ah! – damn him, damn him! Traitor! I wonder where he failed?'<sup>164</sup>

Outraged without any sense of the burdens faced and the difficult decisions taken, the elite of *The Green Curve* appear utterly detached from the frontline of war, and indeed, society in general. While they accuse The Butcher of treason, it is their own understanding of Britishness and national responsibility that Swinton seems to call into question.

Another common introspective theme within Edwardian invasion literature concerns the 'fair-weather' nature of popular imperialism. Despite regularly celebrating the imperial qualities of British national identity, as outlined above, many invasion narratives express concern about the sense of loyalty the Empire was able to command among the British population. The indifference Bert Smallways displays to the threat of German imperial ambitions in *The War in the Air* provides an effective summary of this authorial concern:

This sort of thing was always going on, and on holidays one disregarded it as a matter of course. Week-days, in the slack time after the midday meal, then perhaps one might worry about the Empire and international politics; but not on a sunny Sunday, with a pretty girl trailing behind one, and envious cyclists trying to race you.<sup>165</sup>

Imperialism in the Edwardian period has been interpreted by some historians as a genuinely popular ideal, able to boast currency across the class system. Writing in 1928 in *The Pre-War Mind in Britain*, Caroline Playne described how the Empire "evokes the Briton's imagination like an epic", and asserted that British imperial identity was akin to "the pride of

<sup>164</sup>Swinton, *The Green Curve*, in Clarke, ed, *The Tale of the Next Great War*, pp. 229-233.

<sup>165</sup>*The War in the Air*, pp. 42-43.

the devotee happy in having executed a divine mission.”<sup>166</sup> While not entirely misplaced, this sort of generalisation on the nature of popular imperialism is undoubtedly problematic. In his study *An Imperial War and the British Working Class*, Richard Price has argued that the concept of Edwardian “working-class imperial sentiment” depends heavily on erroneous assumptions concerning working class behaviour during the South African War. Though not dismissing the idea of popular imperial sentiment entirely, Price asserts that historiographical interpretations have often attempted to transform contemporary sentiments into “a systemised and distinct framework of ideology” where one simply did not exist.<sup>167</sup> If imperial sentiment did have a cross-class purchase this was precisely because it was not, in Paula Krebs’s words, “a cultural monolith”.<sup>168</sup> Instead, imperial identity was necessarily flexible, and often involved entirely different principles from one advocate to another.<sup>169</sup>

For the majority of the invasion literature authorship, however, such variable identities were illegitimate. Imperialism was not a fair-weather friend, but a fundamental element of British nationality. It was the unspoken supra-patriotic instinct, or as one contributor described it, “the spirit of adventure and recklessness which is inherent in the British race”.<sup>170</sup> The absence of such qualities is thus presented as a flaw of character, or else endemic of a wider national crisis of imperial responsibility. J. D. Mayne’s short story *The Triumph of Socialism* (1908) well illustrates this particular authorial attitude. Set in a near-future Britain of 1912 in which “the Socialists” have won a resounding general election victory, the work imagines a disastrous socialist administration that collapses within six months. Aside from the nationalisation of heavy industry, agriculture, and transport

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<sup>166</sup> Playne, *The Pre-War Mind in Britain*, p. 41.

<sup>167</sup> R. Price, *An Imperial War and the British Working Class: Working Class Attitudes and Reactions to the Boer War, 1899-1902* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 2.

<sup>168</sup> Krebs, *Gender, Race, and the Writing of Empire*, p. 9.

<sup>169</sup> The nature of British popular imperialism has formed the basis of a fierce historiographical debate, most closely associated with Bernard Porter and John MacKenzie. See J. M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists*. For a good summary of the debate see B. Porter, ‘Further Thoughts on Imperial Absent-Mindedness’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 36.1 (2008), pp. 101-117, and J. M. MacKenzie, ‘“Comfort” and Conviction: A Reply to Bernard Porter’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 36.4 (2008), pp. 659-668.

<sup>170</sup> *The Enemy in our Midst*, p. 173.



infrastructure, the new government slashes military and naval spending. This culminates in German-occupation of the Channel Islands, which in turn prompts the British populace to overthrow their incompetent masters. The thrust of Mayne's narrative, interestingly, is as imperial as it is anti-socialist. During the first parliamentary debate of new socialist-led session, the leader of the Opposition tears into planned military retrenchment, asserting that the resulting inefficiency would see "this proud empire...become the sport of any foreign nation".<sup>171</sup> This is not only dangerous for Britain, it threatens the delicate balance of global power. Upon this advent of British republicanism "the keystone was drawn out of the arch on which the political world rested."<sup>172</sup> By allowing "unthinking democracy...to curb thoughtful imperialism", the author's imagined electorate chooses selfish class interest over imperial belonging, threatening national and international security in the process.<sup>173</sup>

Mayne's call for greater conservatism among the British electorate would have been interpreted elsewhere as simply papering over the cracks. In an age when a virulent, militarised nationalism was taking shape on the far right of British politics, such implicit faith in Britain and the Empire amounted, in the view of some authors, to dangerously passive adherence.<sup>174</sup> Several Edwardian invasion narratives stress the need for some form of explicit individual commitment to the imperial project. As with many of his contemporaries inspired by the tenets of social Darwinism, H. H. Munro is said to have welcomed war in 1914 as "the return of honour to a society which had become hypocritical and weak-willed".<sup>175</sup> Writing in the *Morning Post* in 1915, he asserted that nearly "every red-blooded human boy has had war, in some shape or form, for his first love". Using his article to smear pacifists and conscientious objectors, or variants "from the red-blooded type", Munro dismissed such figures as effete degenerates, unmoved by "the national honour and the

<sup>171</sup> J. D. Mayne, *The Triumph of Socialism* (London: Swann Sonnenschein and Co., 1908), p. 147.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>173</sup> Paraphrase of Lord Milner, in A. P. Thornton, *The Imperial Idea and its Enemies: a Study in British Power*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1985), p. 264.

<sup>174</sup> See Stone, *Breeding Superman*. For the distinctions between British and German militarism see A. Summers, 'Militarism in Britain before the First World War', *History Workshop*, 2 (1976), pp. 104-123.

<sup>175</sup> D. Hibberd, 'Munro, Hector Hugh [Saki] (1870-1916)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35149> (accessed 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014)

national danger”.<sup>176</sup> The post-war German-occupied society of *When William Came*, in which grudging acceptance of the so-called “*fait accompli*” is more common than open resistance to the German occupiers, satirises London ‘Society’ in a similar vein. Perhaps the most interesting character of the short story is Tony Luton, a young socialite and music-hall performer whose success is forged in the cultural and social vacuum of occupied London. Yet in the midst of the narrative he breaks down at an afternoon soirée. Following Yeovil’s disgruntled quoting of William Cowper’s patriotic poem ‘Boadecia, an Ode’ to the party attendees, the silence is broken by a cry of “Hell! And it’s true, that’s the worst of it. It’s damned true!”

Tony Luton confronted him, an angry scowl on his face, a blaze in his heavy-lidded eyes. The boy was without a conscience, almost without a soul, as priests and parsons reckon souls, but there was a slumbering devil-god within him, and Yeovil’s taunting words had broken the slumber.<sup>177</sup>

In this moment of patriotic conservation, Luton embodies this idea of explicit national and imperial commitment. Shortly thereafter it is learnt that Luton has terminated his contract at a London theatre and signed up as a deckhand in the Canadian navy. “Perhaps, after all” muses Yeovil, “there had been some shred of glory amid the trumpet triumph of that July afternoon.”<sup>178</sup>

The changing nature of religious practice in Britain was another social trend identified within invasion literature as a threat to national identity. These changes in the large part concerned declining religious observance, a trend familiar to most industrialised and urbanised European states. Yet religion in Britain during the late-Victorian and Edwardian years was characterised by more than dwindling congregations. The established Anglican Church was experiencing challenges from a variety of confessional, political, and social

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<sup>176</sup> ‘An Old Love’, *Morning Post* (23<sup>rd</sup> April 1915), in A. J. Langguth, *Saki: A Life of Hector Hugh Munro* (London: Hamilton, 1981), p. 258.

<sup>177</sup> Chesney and ‘Saki’, *The Battle of Dorking and When William Came*, p. 148-9.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

movements. By the 1880s Britain's nonconformist Christian denominations were matching their Anglican rivals in terms of numbers. This growth helped fuel the long-running debate over disestablishment, through which the largely nonconformist Liberals pushed for greater religious freedoms. Britain's rising Catholic population, moreover, seemed an equally worrying threat. This is best highlighted by the long afterlife of the mid-Victorian controversy surrounding the conversion of Cardinal Newman, and related anxieties over the growing influence of ritualistic Protestantism.<sup>179</sup> Religion had also begun to reflect British class divisions, as all denominations were struggling to incorporate increasingly secular urban workers. While the working classes often maintained a cultural affinity with Christianity, churches were increasingly becoming a social preserve of the middle class.<sup>180</sup> Among intellectuals, the Edwardian period was shaped by an effort to reconcile faith and reason, and in doing so reject a Victorian sense of spiritual pessimism. Figures such as Arthur Conan-Doyle, T. H. Green, and W. T. Stead were attracted to a variety of spiritual ideas and movements, craving the coherence and epistemological unity that organised religion no longer seemed able to provide.<sup>181</sup>

Such upheavals in national religious life posed difficult questions as to the nature of Britishness. As a fundamental pillar of the British state, the Anglican Church was not an institution that could be easily marginalised. For many religious commentators 'Englishness' as a set of values was rooted in the Reformation, and derived its authenticity "from the institutional link between the Church of England and the British State."<sup>182</sup> The declining health or relevance of the Church in Edwardian Britain, therefore, threatened to undermine the religious and cultural basis of national identity. In his provocative pamphlet *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire* (1905), E. E. Mills identifies Edwardian Britain's irreligious

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<sup>179</sup> For 'ritualism' see K. Robbins, *England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales: The Christian Church 1900-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 27-29.

<sup>180</sup> J. Obelkevich, 'Religion', in F. M. L. Thompson, ed, *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950, Vol. 3, Social Agencies and Institutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 311-356. See also Searle, 'The Role of Religion', in *A New England?*, pp. 532-538.

<sup>181</sup> J. Rose, *The Edwardian Temperament* (Athens OH: Ohio University Press, 1986) pp. 3-24.

<sup>182</sup> Searle, *A New England?*, p. 12.

society as a major factor in the country's fictional collapse. With misunderstandings "flourishing between sect and sect", the failure of British Christianity left "millions upon millions of sad disillusioned folk, in lofty palace and low hamlet, in mean slums and in drab suburbs, crying unto their God for some one to tell them how to live."<sup>183</sup> Offering a political explanation for religious decline, Le Queux in *The Invasion of 1910* lambasts 'socialism', "with its creed of 'Thou shalt have no other god but Thyself'" for replacing "the religious beliefs of a generation of Englishmen taught to suffer and die sooner than surrender to wrong."<sup>184</sup> This idea is also developed by the anonymous author of *Red England* (1909). Discussing the failure of the social revolution that forms the basis of the narrative, the narrator asserts that British revolutionaries had failed to appreciate how socialism "meant an end to religion, and an end to morality". Once this reality becomes clear, support for the socialist government evaporates, and post-revolution Britain gains a greater understanding of the delicacy of national identity. For as the work concludes, "Religion and love, imagination and property – all these things hang together."<sup>185</sup>

Several invasion narratives envisage external threats to Britain's spiritual status quo. William Palmer's evocatively titled *Under Home Rule* (1912) is, in the words of one derisory review, "an orgy of pictorial prophecy".<sup>186</sup> The work imagines a near-future in which newly-independent Ireland has become "a priest-infected slum".<sup>187</sup> Dominated by the Catholic Church, Ireland under Home Rule is a totalitarian state, in which law is enforced by a secret police often absurdly disguised as nuns. To the dismay of British Unionists, the predominantly Protestant province of Ulster suffers religious persecution at the hands of the Dublin-based theocracy. Investing heavily in Catholic-owned businesses in which "only Catholics shall be employed", and suppressing Protestant services "on the grounds that they provoke disorder", the goal of the Vatican-dominated government is to "prove to the

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<sup>183</sup> *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, p. 30.

<sup>184</sup> *Invasion of 1910*, p. 542.

<sup>185</sup> *Red England*, pp. 215 and 222.

<sup>186</sup> 'List of New Books', *The Athenaeum*, 4397 (3<sup>rd</sup> February 1912), p. 127

<sup>187</sup> W. Palmer, *Under Home Rule. A Novel* (London: Baines and Scarsbrook, 1912), p. 27.

Protestant element that they have no chance, and had better give up the struggle".<sup>188</sup> Added to this dystopian vision is a plot to re-Catholicise Britain. Thanks to "the new system of payment of Members" introduced by the Liberal Government in 1911, "it is an easy matter" explains one senior Irish Cardinal, "for the Church to run candidates in England and subsidise them." Once Westminster is flooded by such MPs, Britain will become subservient to Ireland, meaning that "the Vatican must in due course embrace the Empire".<sup>189</sup>

This alarmist vision of religious invasion had previously been explored by Allen Upward in his 1904 work *The Fourth Conquest of England*. A complex character of extremely varied pursuits, Upward was highly regarded by contemporaries including Ezra Pound for his anthropological and philosophical writings, such as *The New Word* (1907) and *The Divine Mystery* (1913).<sup>190</sup> His success as a popular novelist, by contrast, seems to have been through financial necessity rather than personal enthusiasm. As he wrote in the autobiographical *Some Personalities*, "It was with the greatest reluctance that I came to recognise, at the age of thirty, that this [writing novels] was the only means of support open to me".<sup>191</sup> The controversial and staunch opinions expressed in his fictional narratives, therefore, are difficult to take at face value. This is particularly true of the anti-Catholic rhetoric that shapes *The Fourth Conquest of England*, described by its subtitle as "a narrative of the re-union of the Churches of England and Rome, followed by the restoration of the Stuarts and the setting up of the Holy Inquisition in England."<sup>192</sup> Despite growing up in a family of Plymouth Brethren, whose "views on the Papacy are well known", Upward's own understanding of religion was flexible and idiosyncratic, and involved a healthy contempt for

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., p. 34-35.

<sup>190</sup> See Donald, 'The Mysterious Allen Upward', *American Scholar*, pp. 53-65.

<sup>191</sup> 20/1631, pseud. (A. Upward), *Some Personalities* (London: John Murray, 1921), p. 123. See also Kemp, Mitchell, and Trotter, *Edwardian Fiction*, p. 397.

<sup>192</sup> A. Upward, *The Fourth Conquest of England* (London: Tyndale Press, 1904). Issued as part of Upward's 'The Romance of Politics' series, *Fourth Conquest* is the sequel to *High Treason* (London: Primrose Press, 1903). The latter novel explores the peculiar Edwardian resurgence of Legitimism (concerning the rightful heir to the British throne), a movement Upward was indirectly involved in. For more see *Some Personalities*, pp. 212-218.

the insular suspicion of Christian denominations.<sup>193</sup> The plot of *The Fourth Conquest of England*, in which Jacobite revival in Britain is tracked from nineteenth-century Catholic emancipation through to the accession of the Stuart pretender Mary III, is arguably more satirical than prophetic. Pre-empting the bizarre imagery of *Under Home Rule*, Marshall Law is enforced by “Irish Roughts” armed “with revolvers, knuckledusters, and other means of insuring respect for Catholic susceptibilities.”<sup>194</sup> The narrative concludes with further absurdity, as the Vatican issues an edict declaring the non-existence of the Antipodes, causing panic, mass migration, and widespread privation. Crude and bigoted at first glance, Upward’s narrative arguably parodies the virulence and longevity of British anti-Catholicism.<sup>195</sup>

The concept promoted by Palmer and satirised by Upward is one of both religious and national identity, in which Anglicanism forms a fundamental aspect of Britishness, and Catholicism represents a very real threat to this status. This sense of antithesis, echoing Trumble and Wolk Rager’s principle of “diametrically opposed binaries”, is similarly prominent in invasion literature’s representation of urbanisation.<sup>196</sup> Just as Britain (or more specifically, England) is often portrayed as quintessentially rural, cities are regularly described through the language of decline and foreignness. Returning to *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, the author E. E. Mills identifies “the first sign of decadence in a Nation” as the point at which society “forsakes the calm delights of the country to live amid the depressing splendour of dreary towns.” A demographic trend that triggers agricultural decay, religious decline, and ill-health, Mills warns that the economic benefits of “town-life”

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<sup>193</sup> This attitude is illustrated in *Some Personalities*. During his early legal career in Dublin, Upward claims to have introduced himself as a Buddhist. “As no one in Dublin knew anything about Buddhism this enabled me to pass freely in both camps”, meaning Protestant and Catholic social circles, pp. 72-73.

<sup>194</sup> *The Fourth Conquest of England*, p. 19.

<sup>195</sup> Though this remains a supposition, it seems a relatively safe one. Upward’s correspondence with his literary agent in early-1904 suggests that he was willing to write “topical romance, sensational or humorous”, A. Upward to Mr. Cazenove, 6<sup>th</sup> January 1904, Edward Hall Manuscript Collection, Wigan Archives Service, EHC216/RM1569. In a later letter, Upward proposed an idea for a satirical work involving W. T. Stead, in which the famous social commentator would be depicted “meddling in everything from Russo-Jap. War to neighbour’s children”, A. Upward to Mr. Cazenove, 7<sup>th</sup> September 1904, EHC216/RM1569.

<sup>196</sup> A. Trumble and A. Wolk Rager, eds, *Edwardian Opulence: British Art at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), p. 3.

are no compensation for its enervating, corrupting influence on the mass populace.<sup>197</sup> Closely related to contemporary social Darwinist fears of physical degeneration, such narratives describe cities as exercising a highly negative influence on their citizens. Chesney's depiction of rural Sussex found in *The Battle of Dorking* (quoted above) certainly contrasts with the following description of "Lancashire or the Black Country" from a second Gibbon-inspired pamphleteer:

There the wildest flights of hyperbole were equalled and exceeded by dismal truth and the sun was literally obscured at noonday. A host of ungainly chimneys loaded the air with poisonous fumes which oppressed the hardiest species of vegetation. The inhabitants, penned up by day in close factories or the dimmer and more stifling obscurity of mines, herded by night in crowded tenements, were pale, sickly, and meagre...<sup>198</sup>

Many of the national identity anxieties explored in this chapter arguably emerged out of a basic mistrust of modernity. In *The Culture of Time and Space* Stephen Kern suggests that the pre-1914 generation often looked to the past for stability "in the face of rapid technological, cultural, and social change". Lamentations for a lost age of religiosity and rural living, then, involved the past being harnessed "as a source of identity in an increasingly secular world".<sup>199</sup> The failure of invasion literature to correctly assess the impact of technology on modern warfare (discussed in section 1.3) can be seen as one product of this reticence to abandon the past. Charles Gannon has identified Le Queux, for example, as suffering from a "stolid, dogged, subconscious refusal...to part with the chivalric ideas of earlier ages of warfare", a refusal that heavily shaped his speculative narratives of modern war.<sup>200</sup> Another embodiment of this backward-looking tendency is the derisory, negative approach often taken towards modern technology within invasion narratives.

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<sup>197</sup> *Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, p. 6.

<sup>198</sup> 'From the New Gibbon', *Blackwood's Magazine* (February 1899), p. 244.

<sup>199</sup> S. Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1920*, (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 36.

<sup>200</sup> C. E. Gannon, *Rumors of War and Infernal Machines: Technomilitary Agenda-Setting in American and British Speculative Fiction* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), p. 53.

Mulling over the impact of widespread tramlines in ever-expanding Manchester, one disillusioned urbanite of *Starved into Surrender* complains of trams “going along so fast that we can’t see where we’re going”.<sup>201</sup> Highlighting the fine line between worthwhile innovation and reckless excess, ‘science’ is seen as possessing no social conscience, having “prostituted itself to Mammon instead of working only to advance knowledge in order to perfect life.”<sup>202</sup> For Gordon Stables, writing in the preface to *The Meteor Flag of England*, scientific advance equates to “a real Tower of Babel” that “in the arts of peace, as in the arts of war...is ever, ever rising”. Set in the distant year of 1980, in which “terrible instruments of warfare” have rendered war more devastating than ever, Stables evidently questions the received Victorian wisdom of uninterrupted scientific progress.<sup>203</sup>

Stables was not the only author to question this received wisdom. In *War* (1914) by Wilfred Newton, the bombardment of a coastal town by an invading fleet is described as “detached and dehumanised”. The guns themselves, working “with the precise and deadly mechanism of excellent clockwork”, are compared to “dried scientists of imperturbable emotions, poking about through piles of useless matter for a truth.” Newton’s critique appears to distinguish technological advance from societal improvement, suggesting that ‘the truth’ of industrialised weaponry may well have a detrimental impact on modern civilisation.<sup>204</sup> Sadly, as a review from *The Bookman* acknowledged that December, Newton’s realism fell short of later events, as “even its horrors are not so horrible as the actual war has proved that they would be.”<sup>205</sup> Other authors were less concerned with

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<sup>201</sup> *Starved into Surrender*, p. 39.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.

<sup>203</sup> *The Meteor Flag of England*, vii-viii.

<sup>204</sup> W. D. Newton, *War* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1914), pp. 2-3. Newton’s exploration of the negative social consequences of modern military technology touches upon Joanna Bourke’s research into the physiological impact such changes in warfare had on soldiers. Highlighting the dislocating influence on its operators of “the technology of long-distance killing” such as artillery fire and aerial bombardment, Bourke argues that “the primitive, inherited, animalistic nature of fear in warfare was simply not compatible with modern conditions of combat”. These developments “placed an unbearable strain on men’s physiological inheritance”, which manifested itself as complaints of anxiety, neurosis, and ultimately helped shape understandings of post-traumatic stress disorder. See *Fear: A Cultural History* (London: Virago, 2006), pp. 204-206.

<sup>205</sup> ‘War’, *The Bookman*, 47.279 (December 1914), p. 20.



technological advance *in toto* as they were with specific aspects of experimental engineering. James Blyth, for example, was clearly suspicious of the drive for aerial technology in vogue during the Edwardian years. His concern is communicated through Noel Pettigrew, the scientific prodigy of *Ichabod*, who considers the entire process futile. “Whether for warfare or peace”, he asserts to a research colleague, “the air is no place for man”.<sup>206</sup> Blyth also demonstrates a fear of the personal and social influence of technological modernity. The eponymous tyrant Lewis Ferrer in *The Tyranny*, a nihilistic and brutal megalomaniac, is described as a natural product of his time. Had Ferrer “lived in any other age but that monstrous epoch when Mammon was the only recognised deity...he would have been a mighty power for good.”<sup>207</sup> Instead, Ferrer is a man for whom celebrated British values of sentiment and decency “are not modern enough”.<sup>208</sup> All such narratives were in different ways warning that, as the narrator of *Red England* summarises, “there is no folly so great as the folly of the wise ‘scientific’ man”.<sup>209</sup>

While the authors above emphasise the importance of questioning the value of technological advance, others rallied against what they considered a contemptible and peculiarly British reactionary position. Such writers were often advocates of the gospel of ‘national efficiency’, a fluid term that Geoffrey Searle has described as the dominant “political catchcry” of the Edwardian period. Emphasising consensus and cross-party cooperation in order to improve Britain’s political and social organisation, this multifaceted ideology touched on questions of physical health, education, political reform, scientific advance, and a variety of other progressive principles.<sup>210</sup> Such ideas are emphasised by H. G. Wells, one of the

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<sup>206</sup> *Ichabod*, p. 157. By the publication of *The Peril of Pines Place* (1912) Blyth seems to have had a change of heart on this issue. Perhaps responding to recent advances in aerial technology, such as the Wright Brothers’ flight and Bleriot’s successful aerial crossing of the Channel (both in 1909), Blyth’s later narrative includes a prototype aeroplane (the *Gerfalcon*) designed and flown by one of the protagonists. “Two years ago”, he tells an assembled crowd, “you would have thought that I was talking nonsense in saying I’m going to fly from Essex here [‘Daneshire’] tonight”, p. 57.

<sup>207</sup> *The Tyranny*, p. 267.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>209</sup> *Red England*, p. 170.

<sup>210</sup> G. R. Searle, *The Quest for National Efficiency: A Study in British Politics and Political Thought, 1899-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971) pp. 2 and 54-106.

most prominent supporters of national efficiency ideas, in *The War in the Air*. The work is centred in part on the eccentric inventor Alfred Butteridge, whose blueprints for a military aircraft fail to garner interest with the War Office. Furious at this snub, Butteridge threatens to take his designs elsewhere; “I am an Imperial Englishman...[but] There are younger nations – living nations! Nations that do not snore and gurgle helplessly in paroxysms of plethora upon beds of formality and red tape.” Britain is often presented in such fiction as “blinded to science” in this manner, criticised as a nation “too listless to utilise the most modern experiences of the science of war”.<sup>211</sup> This places Britain in stark contrast to its modernising and dynamic competitors. Napier Hawke’s *The Invasion That Did Not Come Off* (1909), in which German zeppelins render Britain’s naval strength effectively obsolete, describes Germany as “the one progressive and scientific country in the world”.<sup>212</sup> British attitudes are mocked by Kaiser Wilhelm himself in Coulson Kernahan’s *The Red Peril*. Personifying German ambition and scientific advance, the Kaiser criticises British conservatism for creating a society where “a man who dares to approach a War Office official with a new invention is frowned down at sight.”<sup>213</sup> Rather than prudent or self-preserving, British suspicion of modern technology is, in the minds of these authors, a crippling weakness of national identity.

## 2.5 - Conclusion: The Breadth of Britishness

This chapter has aimed to emphasise the value of analysing the representation of Britishness in Edwardian invasion literature. These narratives provide insights on how the British nation was ‘imagined’ during the Edwardian period, a process identified by Benedict Anderson as the most rewarding approach to analysing nationalism. The chapter has highlighted various qualities associated with British national identity in invasion narratives,

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<sup>211</sup> *The War in the Air*, p. 31, A. Niemann, *The Coming Conquest of England* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1904), p. 113.

<sup>212</sup> N. Hawke, *The Invasion That Did Not Come Off* (London: Henry J. Drane, 1909), p. 78.

<sup>213</sup> *The Red Peril*, p. 206.

including the cultural dominance of Englishness, the complex relationship between national and imperial identities, and the 'assimilative' nature of Edwardian Britishness. Rather than contributing to a uniform understanding of national identity, such narratives produced a series of imagined 'Britains'. What can be said to unite these contrasting interpretations is a pronounced sense of ill-defined anxiety, emerging from a series of influences thought to be threatening Britain and British identity. These component anxieties include concern over German economic infiltration, equating foreign immigration with espionage and political radicalism, and worries over urbanisation, declining religious observance, and the impact (both positive and negative) of technological advance. The clearest representations of Britishness in Edwardian invasion literature, therefore, appear in opposition to a wide variety of 'non-British' forces.

By highlighting the important position of national identity in Edwardian invasion narratives, this chapter has pursued two main arguments. Firstly, it has illustrated the highly insular quality of invasion literature. Despite ostensibly focusing on external military threats, such works are equally shaped by introspective anxieties over political, cultural, and social change. The chapter has highlighted, furthermore, that invasion literature provided an implicit forum for debating the nature of Edwardian national identity. In imagining external threats to the political status quo, such narratives (in A. Michael Martin's words) ideologically produced specific understandings of Britishness. Despite often bearing very little in common with one another, such visions help illustrate one of the key underlying functions of Edwardian invasion narratives. These works were not simply warnings of imminent foreign attack, they were exercises in assessing the nature of contemporary national identity. For without a clear sense of what Edwardian Britain was, what exactly was at stake in the face of invasion?

## **Dreams of 'A Nations in Arms': Representations of Compulsory Military Service in Edwardian Invasion Literature**

### **3.1 - Introduction**

The last chapter focused on the nature of national identity in British invasion narratives. While it explored the representation of a range of domestic political issues, including minority nationalisms, urbanisation, and anxieties over immigration, it did so in an indirect sense, via the analytical prism of Edwardian Britishness. This chapter aims to engage with the 'internal' themes of invasion literature more directly, through assessing the genre's representation of the pre-1914 campaign for compulsory military service. A controversial and polarising issue, this campaign arguably influenced contemporary invasion literature more than any comparable domestic political question. This will be emphasised in the chapter's opening case study. By presenting *The Message* (1907) by A. J. Dawson as a representative example, the central position of the campaign for compulsory military service within Edwardian invasion literature will be identified. Following a brief historiographical survey of the pre-war compulsory service movement, the chapter then assesses some of the socio-political anxieties commonly associated with this campaign in invasion literature. This analysis will give particular focus to two issues, the perceived threat of physical degeneration among the British population, and related concerns over the national 'obsession' with sport and leisure. Having established these discontents, the chapter goes on to explore various visions of compulsory military service in Edwardian invasion narratives, illustrating how authors imagined such reform might change British society.

In emphasising the significant influence of the campaign for compulsory military service on Edwardian invasion literature, this chapter will make three key arguments. Firstly, compulsory service will be identified as an issue that linked external and internal political concerns. While proposals for military reform were self-evidently conditioned by foreign

policy considerations, the compulsory service campaign employed a series of equally significant domestic political arguments regarding the social and physical benefits of introducing national military obligations. This dynamic is clearly apparent in Edwardian invasion narratives. The second argument concerns the marked inconsistencies with which the campaign is represented in this literature. Visions of compulsory military service differ significantly from one invasion narrative to another in a contradictory and, at times, paradoxical fashion. This is a product, it will be argued, of an authorial unwillingness to entirely abandon British traditions of military volunteerism in favour of the European (or more specifically, German) model of military compulsion. Finally, the prominence of compulsory military service themes in these narratives questions the principle that such invasion narratives were a product of traditional Conservatism. Proposing radical reforms of the status quo, and urging unprecedented change rather than political caution, the campaign for military reform (and by extension Edwardian invasion literature) is best approached as a product of the 'Radical Right'.

### **3.2 - Case Study: A J Dawson's *The Message* (1907)**

This chapter has utilised *The Message* as a case-study for several reasons. Firstly, the narrative generated significant levels of contemporary debate, highlighted by a series of divisive critical reviews in periodicals and newspapers. Secondly, the author Alec John Dawson is someone for whom biographical information is freely available. Born in Wandsworth in 1872, Dawson was a journalist, author, travel writer (most notably on North Africa), and imperial enthusiast. A staunch advocate of compulsory military service, his work for the pressure group the National Service League (NSL) included responsibility, according to his obituary in *The Times*, "for the enlistment of thousands of recruits in and around London". Dawson later served a short term as Director of Information for the Government of Bombay that was curtailed by ill-health, having suffered significant injury in a 1916 gas

attack during the First World War.<sup>1</sup> He also enjoyed a period as editor of *The Standard of Empire*, an offshoot of *The Standard* that encouraged closer imperial ties through British emigration to the dominions.<sup>2</sup> Finally, *The Message* as a narrative is heavily shaped by ideas associated with the Edwardian 'Radical Right'. As Everett Bleiler describes, it is a work "imbedded in a full Edwardian Bildungsroman, told from a religious, ultraconservative, jingoistic point of view".<sup>3</sup> One of the major manifestations of these qualities within *The Message*, this case-study will argue, is Dawson's understanding of military compulsion.

*The Message* is a tale of collapse, introspection, and ultimately national and religious revival. The novel's young protagonist is Dick Mordan, a curate's son and moderate socialist whose journalistic ambitions lead him to work for a sensationalist radical newspaper in London. Though initially relishing the decadent social and cultural habits of the capital, he slowly becomes disenchanted with his new lifestyle. When the Germans launch a surprise attack and successfully occupy Britain, Mordan loses his faith in socialism and throws in his lot with 'The Citizens', a resistance organisation influenced by ideas of closer imperial unity. Led by John Crondall, a veldt scout, war correspondent and colonial icon, the group galvanise an apathetic British population into revolt. Successfully forcing the Kaiser to abandon his expeditionary force, The Citizens help forge a new peace with Germany, and set about the reconstruction of Britain and its Empire. Under the motto of "For God, our Race, and Duty!", Britain emerges from the invasion catastrophe with a federated Empire, a system of compulsory military service, and a commitment to the revivalist gospel of "New Century Puritanism".<sup>4</sup> Concluding with a passage from Rudyard Kipling's famous imperial poem *Recessional*, the eponymous 'message' is a shot across the national bows. Britain is not simply in danger of military subjugation, it is deficient in almost every sense. The

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<sup>1</sup> 'Major A J Dawson', *The Times* (February 7th 1951), p. 8. See also H. J. Morgan, ed, *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Toronto, 1912), p. 307, N. Robson, 'A. J. Dawson, Novelist from Wandsworth', *Wandsworth Historian*, 91 (2011), pp. 1-5.

<sup>2</sup> S. Kemp, C. Mitchell and D. Trotter, *Edwardian Fiction: An Oxford Companion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> E. F. Bleiler, *Science-Fiction: The Early Years* (Kent OH: Kent State University Press, 1990), p. 185.

<sup>4</sup> A. J. Dawson, *The Message* (Boston MA: Dana Estes and Co., 1907), p. 393.

German invasion when it came was thus “not so much by the skill and forethought of the enemy”, but the product of “a state of affairs in England which made that day one of shame and humiliation.”<sup>5</sup>

The contributing factors to this national state of affairs, covered extensively in the narrative of *The Message*, are rarely far removed from the author’s ideas on military reform. Dawson quickly identifies an urban underclass that, in his view, “would not do any kind of work because they found that by judicious sponging they could live and obtain alcohol and tobacco in idleness.” For the average Briton “the country’s defences were actually of far less importance...than the county’s cricket averages”.<sup>6</sup> The popular hostility to enforced military service in Edwardian Britain is summarily dismissed by Dawson as the natural product of this urban environment. “Not really opposition”, this attitude was “a part of the disease of the period; the dropsical, fatty degeneration of a people.”<sup>7</sup> In a passage that describes the ‘Westminster Riots’, an outbreak of panic and civil disobedience that meets news of the German approach on London, the House of Commons is criticised as the natural product of its degenerate electorate. Once an august chamber, Dawson’s Parliament was elected

by a tidal wave of reactionary public feeling, and of the blind selfishness of a decadence born of long freedom from any form of national discipline; of liberties too easily won but half-understood; of superficial education as to rights, and abysmal ignorance as to duties.<sup>8</sup>

Offering a remedy to this situation, the post-occupation nation of *The Message* introduces military service as a suffrage qualification, while the ‘Discipline Act’ criminalises unemployment, doing away with the unpatriotic “loafer”. By the narrative’s end Britain, “the metropolis and centre of the Empire” has been transformed into “a nation in arms”.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 190.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 31 and 106.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 194.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 376-385.

The nature of Dawson's vision of a 'nation in arms' highlights the multi-faceted impact a system of compulsory service was presumed to have. The "National Defence Act" ratified in the final chapters of *The Message* creates "a permanent organisation of home defence", ensuring Britain's vulnerable shores are "positively impregnable". Yet this military development is framed in quite deliberate terms. Discussing the opposition such proposals initially faced, as "legislation born of a state of war", such concerns are said to have faded within a year of peace. This acceptance is emphasised as an important shift in British attitudes towards compulsory military service. Maintaining "an adequate defence system", then, was now seen not as a matter of preparing for war, but as "the one and only means of preventing war."<sup>10</sup> Such sentiment closely resembled the words of Lord Roberts, President of the NSL, who had described compulsory in a 1906 speech as "adequate national insurance against the dangers of both Peace and War".<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the impact of military compulsion in *The Message* is as much social as it is military. In his capacity as narrator, Mordan sees no need "to enlarge now upon the other benefits, the mental, moral, and physical advancement which this legislation has given us." Such benefits were clearly seen by Dawson as self-evident.<sup>12</sup>

In an echo of the 'national identity' focus of the last chapter, the Britishness of *The Message* is of a fundamentally imperial quality. Save for Dick Mordan, the heroes of the narrative are imperialists to a man, and advocates of the 'Greater Britain' model of imperial integration. For John Crondall and The Citizens, every political consideration "hinged upon and was subservient to the Imperialist idea of devotion to the bond which united all British possessions under one rule."<sup>13</sup> At the meeting in London that establishes The Citizens, Crondall outlines his theory that, in imperial terms, the periphery had grown stronger than the centre. German invasion was "the climax and penalty of England's mad disregard of

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 375-377.

<sup>11</sup> 'Address given the Royal Institute, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1906', in F. S. Roberts, *A Nation in Arms: Speeches on the Requirements of the British Army* (London: John Murray, 1907), p. 139.

<sup>12</sup> *The Message*, p. 375.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 84-5.



duty”, a product of the “great mountain of apathy” that had come to characterise the mother country.<sup>14</sup> Britain’s future now depended on the imperial dominions, the areas where truly British values remained intact. Put in sea-faring metaphor by Crondall, “the folk at Home have lost their bearings; their compasses want adjusting.”<sup>15</sup> The country’s weakness, then, was not solely the product of degeneration, but was equally attributable to insularity and anti-imperialism.

One way of managing this adjustment was to encourage an increase in Dominion emigration. Crondall’s associates include two Canadian parsons, Stairs and Reynolds, who deliver a stirring sermon to a packed Albert Hall in the first public meeting organised by The Citizens. Recounting the story of Edward Hare, an emigrant who gave up his successful farm in Southern Manitoba to return to Britain as an advocate of emigration, the congregation hear how Hare followed a sense of imperial duty, preaching “not religion but the prairie”, hoping to show his fellow Londoners “what four years’ clean work had given him in Canada.”<sup>16</sup> Such sentiment was echoed in *The Standard of Empire* under Dawson’s stewardship. Branding itself as a paper for those interested in migrating to or investing in Britain’s Dominions, much of the supplement was devoted to shipping advertisements, the addresses of colonial emigration agencies, and a policy to review “the d---dest colonial books politely and win the hearts of the local press”. By the end of 1908, the Canadian government alone had spent over £1000 on advertising within it. Yet it was not simply a business venture, but part of the wider campaign for socio-economic imperial preference. As the editor of *The Standard* H. A. Gynne explained, *The Standard of Empire* was a product of his duty, much like the fictional Hare, to end the apathy of a British public “so wrapped-up

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp. 249 and 260.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 249.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 283.

in its own pettifogging parochial affairs that it does not see the grand destiny in which it can participate if it takes a reasonable interest in our Empire.”<sup>17</sup>

Vitriolic and highly sensationalist, Dawson’s work is easy to dismiss as the irrelevant haranguing of a political extremist. Indeed, many contemporary reviewers interpreted *The Message* in just this manner. One review in *The Bookman* praised the quality of Dawson’s prose, yet compared the novel to “the fair woman tailing off into a fish – for the Jingo conclusions of ‘The Message’ are fishy to the last degree.”<sup>18</sup> Commenting on his evident contempt for the young Liberal administration, the *Times Literary Supplement* thought Dawson’s understanding of contemporary politics did “not seem to be profound.”<sup>19</sup> Even the NSL attempted to distance itself from the unchecked rhetoric of *The Message*. The editor of *The Spectator* John St. Loe Strachey advised Lord Roberts to avoid association with Dawson’s rabid attacks on the Liberals, or risk further damaging the league’s status as a non-partisan organisation. Strachey also criticised the fictional German outrages depicted in the book, asserting, “I cannot help thinking that Mr Dawson has made a very great mistake in attributing acts of special barbarity and cruelty to the German invading army.”<sup>20</sup>

The work’s reception, however, was by no means uniformly negative. Despite the NSL refusing to distribute the work, it remained popular with the public, and went through numerous editions. One commentator in *The Saturday Review* praised Dawson’s effort to “emphasise and condemn the selfish individualism which prevents Englishmen making personal sacrifices for national efficiency”.<sup>21</sup> “In an age which is overfull of novels of war”,

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<sup>17</sup> S. J. Potter, *News and the British World, The Emergence of an Imperial Press System* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), pp. 126-129.

<sup>18</sup> ‘The Message’, *The Bookman*, 32.191 (August 1907), p. 179.

<sup>19</sup> ‘List of New Books and Reprints’, *The Times Literary Supplement*, 275 (19<sup>th</sup> April 1907), p. 127.

<sup>20</sup> J. St. Loe Strachey to Lord Roberts (11<sup>th</sup> June 1907), in H. Moon, ‘The Invasion of the United Kingdom: Public Controversy and Official Planning’, unpublished PhD thesis (University of London, 1968), p. 321. In a review of *The Message*, *The Spectator* made an illustrative point on the purpose behind Dawson’s work. Criticising his understanding of military and naval strategy, the review speculates that “Mr. Dawson’s idea in writing the book is probably to point out what he conceives to be the dangerous moral state of the English nation, rather than to evolve credible military or naval incidents”, ‘Novels’, *The Spectator* (18<sup>th</sup> May 1907), p. 802.

<sup>21</sup> ‘The Message’, *Saturday Review*, 103.2691 (25<sup>th</sup> May 1907), p. 658.

wrote another, “we find ‘The Message’ stimulating and arresting.”<sup>22</sup> Most complimentary of all was the Canadian novelist Sir Gilbert Parker. A promoter of imperial academic collaboration and chairman of the Imperial South African Association, Parker thought *The Message* “mercilessly logical...[and] surely founded upon dark facts in the condition of England to-day”. Recognising its divisive quality, his commentary ends with the following tribute:

Political the book is, for it scourges a Nation, it lashes a party, and it reproaches two great Parties of the State. It will be treated with contempt by some; it will infuriate others. Its faults will lay open to virulent attacks, but the book will carry conviction. It will take its place. It will fulfil its appointed task.<sup>23</sup>

What Parker considered the task of *The Message* to be, and whether it could be said to have been fulfilled, is unclear. His faith in Dawson’s merciless logic now appears misplaced, the product of an imperial man’s enthusiasm for a fictional vision of rejuvenated empire. Yet *The Message* is undoubtedly a remarkable work, largely thanks to the sheer breadth of its socio-political scope. There is anger at both declining religiosity and the ‘Catholicising’ influence of “sacrosanct glamour” on Anglican practices; concern over the political plans of the Liberal government; fears that the nation’s urban poor were in the grips of physical degeneration; and sweeping cultural judgement of the average Briton’s leisure habits.<sup>24</sup> While socialism and radicalism bear the brunt of Dawson’s critique, imperialism is lauded, alongside a system of colonial preference to replace the inflexible economic system of Free Trade. Unifying these disparate anxieties are Dawson’s proposed solutions, imperial federation and compulsory military service. Of these two the latter is particularly significant, as the theme of military compulsion is consistently employed in this function by authors of Edwardian invasion narratives. In this sense, the treatment of compulsory military service in

<sup>22</sup> ‘The Message’, *The Athenaeum*, 4148 (27<sup>th</sup> April 1907), p. 501.

<sup>23</sup> ‘Sir Gilbert Parker on “The Message”’, *Judy: The London Serio-Comic Journal*, 72.2093 (5<sup>th</sup> June 1907), p. 352.

<sup>24</sup> *The Message*, p. 70.

*The Message* provides a microcosm of the wider literature. Creating speculative scenarios that called for military reform, this campaign not only helped writers identify Britain's socio-political ills, it simultaneously offered a much-needed antidote. As a later section of this chapter will explore, Britain's "anticonscription mentality" is often identified within invasion narratives as the root cause of many domestic political problems.<sup>25</sup> First, however, it is worth exploring the dimensions of the Edwardian campaign for compulsory military service: its origins, its successes, and its limitations.

### 3.3 - The Case for Conscription

The genesis of the Edwardian campaign for compulsory military service, as has been widely covered by historians, was the British experience of the South African War.<sup>26</sup> It was widely assumed that British operations in South Africa would constitute a 'teatime war', much like the various and straightforward colonial campaigns of the recent past. In the event, the conflict proved expensive, time-consuming, and extremely politically damaging. Beginning in October 1899, it was initially marked by a series of catastrophic British military defeats (the worst of which took place during the infamous 'Black Week'), and was followed by a

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<sup>25</sup> G. Q. Flynn, *Conscription and Democracy: the Draft in France, Great Britain, and the United States* (Westport CA: Greenwood Press, 2002), p. 12.

<sup>26</sup> Such research includes M. Allison, 'The National Service Issue 1899-1914', unpublished PhD thesis, University of London (1975), A. J. A. Morris's *The Scaremongers: The Advocacy of War and Rearmament 1896-1914* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), R. J. Q. Adams and P. P. Poirier, *The Conscription Controversy in Great Britain, 1900-1918*, (London: MacMillan, 1987), R. J. Q. Adams, 'The National Service League and Mandatory Service in Edwardian Britain', *Armed Forces and Society* 12.1 (1985), pp. 53-74, R. J. Q. Adams, 'Field Marshall Earl Roberts: Army and Empire', in J. A. Thompson and A. Mejia, eds, *Edwardian Conservatism, Five Studies in Adaptation*, (London: Croom Helm, 1988), pp. 41-76, F. Coetzee, *For Party or Country: Nationalism and the Dilemmas of Popular Conservatism in Edwardian England*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), A. Summers, 'Militarism in Great Britain before the Great War', *History Workshop Journal*, 2 (1972), pp. 104-123, A. Summers, 'The Character of Edwardian Nationalism: Three Popular Leagues', in P. Kennedy and A. Nicholls, eds, *Nationalist and Racist Movements in Britain and Germany before 1914* (London and Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1981), pp. 68-87, Flynn, *Conscription and Democracy*, M. Hendley, "Help us to secure a strong, healthy, prosperous and peaceful Britain': The Social Arguments of the Campaign for Compulsory Military Service in Britain, 1899-1914', *Canadian Journal of History*, 30.2 (1995), pp. 261-288, M. Hendley, *Organised Patriotism and the Crucible of War: Popular Imperialism in Britain, 1914-1932* (Montreal: L McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012), R. T. Stearn, "'The Last Glorious Campaign": Lord Roberts, The National Service League and Compulsory Military Training, 1902-1914', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 87.352 (2009), pp. 312-330.

prolonged period of stalemate in which British and colonial soldiers struggled to subdue the guerrilla-style resistance of the Boers. The celebrations that met the relief of Mafeking throughout Britain in May 1900, heavily criticised by many Liberal commentators, highlighted the significant level national anxiety seemed to have reached.<sup>27</sup> By the war's end in mid-1902, it had cost 22,000 British lives, more than £200 million, and required an army of 450,000 to defeat an ill-equipped enemy widely derided as "mounted peasants".<sup>28</sup> Despite eventual victory, Britain's reputation as the predominant global power had been significantly undermined. Within Britain itself, moreover, the war triggered a deep and lengthy period of introspection. Why had the army performed so badly, and been frustrated by the Boers for so long? As L.S. Amery remarked in a rapidly published history of the war, the conflict had

profoundly affected the whole nation in many ways...The war has been the nation's Recessional after all the pomp and show of the year of Jubilee. It has transmuted the complacent arrogance and contempt of other nations begotten of long years of peace and prosperity to a truer consciousness both of our strength and of our defects.<sup>29</sup>

One issue that the war served to crystallise was that of military reform. Britain's poor military performance in South Africa formed the subject of several royal commissions, in an effort to find ways of improving military preparation and readiness. In 1903 the Norfolk Commission caused controversy in criticising "the philosophical and practical underpinnings of army recruiting policy", and called for Britain to adopt the continental model of universal military training. Sponsoring the introduction of a politically controversial vision, the Commission was duly criticised by the Foreign Secretary Lord Lansdowne for ignoring what

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<sup>27</sup> In *The Psychology of Jingoism*, J. A. Hobson identified the distinctive feature of the Mafeking celebrations as "the wide prevalence of a sudden fury which broke down for the nonce the most sacred distinction of classes, and fused the most antagonistic elements of London life for a brief moment into anarchic fraternity", (London: Grant Richards, 1901), p. 32. For an interesting revisionist essay see K. Good, "Perfect Saturnalia": The Mafeking Celebrations and the Carnavalesque', unpublished essay (University of Liverpool, 2002).

<sup>28</sup> D. Lowry, 'Not Just a 'Tea-Time War'', in *The South African War Reappraised*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> L. S. Amery, ed, *The Times History of the War in South Africa*, Vol. I, (London: Sampson Low, 1900), p. 11.

had been a much narrower remit, and its recommendations were subsequently dismissed.<sup>30</sup> Yet by this stage such ideas had already taken on an extra-parliamentary form. In late February 1902 a meeting held on the issue of national defence at Apsley House, the London residence of the Duke of Wellington, had seen the establishment of the National Service League. The founding members of this organisation believed it “desirable that either military or naval service for national defence...be made compulsory by law”, and created the league as a method of promoting such objectives.<sup>31</sup> Though enjoying the patronage of many Edwardian political heavyweights, it was not until the Victorian military icon Lord Roberts became its president in January 1905 that the NSL achieved major prominence.<sup>32</sup> Under his stewardship the league grew from less than 2000 to 100,000 members by the outbreak of war, while the organisation’s journal *The Nation in Arms* reached a monthly circulation of 17,500 by 1908.<sup>33</sup>

Despite this relative level of popular success, the NSL faced an uphill battle to garner truly national support for a number of reasons. The first of these is what G. Q. Flynn has identified as the national “anticonscription mentality”. For many in Edwardian Britain the idea of compulsory military service, or as its detractors labelled it, conscription, represented a dangerous attack on long-held individual freedoms. This opposition arguably emerged out of Victorian liberalism, as a *laissez faire* opposition to state intervention. Just as the proposed introduction of import tariffs seemed to represent an attack on the individual freedom to

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<sup>30</sup> Adams, ‘The National Service League and Mandatory Service in Edwardian Britain’, *Armed Forces and Society*, p58-59.

<sup>31</sup> ‘National Defence and Compulsory Service’, *The Times* (27<sup>th</sup> February 1902), p. 7. The official records of the National Service League appear largely to have been lost. For details on the “scattered” sources available see Hendley, *Organised Patriotism*, pp. 305-306.

<sup>32</sup> Those heavyweights present at the founding meeting included the editor of the *National Review* Leo Maxse, the journalist Leopold Amery (see above for his account of the South African War), and the future Liberal cabinet minister J. E. B. Seely, with letters of sympathy received from Arthur Conan Doyle and Colonel Lonsdale Hale, author of *The Horrors of War in Great Britain* (London: Love and Malcolmson, 1910). In later years supporters included Rudyard Kipling, Admiral Lord Charles Beresford, and Lord Derby. See Adams, ‘The National Service League and Mandatory Service in Edwardian Britain’, *Armed Forces and Society*, p. 58-59.

<sup>33</sup> The league also offered a looser and cheaper category of membership. Hendley suggests that by 1914 there were 270,000 such ‘adherents’, *Organised Patriotism and the Crucible of War*, p. 7. The journal’s circulation figures are taken from ‘Report and Balance Sheet to be Submitted to the Members at the Sixth Annual General Meeting of the National Service League’, British Library (London, 1908), p. 38.

trade, compulsory military service appeared a gross violation of liberty, an imposition that would fundamentally question the social and cultural status quo.<sup>34</sup> Edwardian advocates of military compulsion, therefore, spent much of their campaigning time attempting to overcome this ingrained opposition. Some, such as the medieval historian G. G. Coulton, tackled such issues head on. In *A Strong Army in a Free State* (1900), in which the contemporary Swiss militia is championed as an ideal modern defence force, Coulton refuted the notion that compulsory military service was somehow un-English. These familiar objections rested, he argued, “on entirely false conceptions – an ignorance of our own history and of contemporary Europe”.<sup>35</sup> Other proponents, by contrast, adopted a less provocative approach. Writing in *The Nineteenth Century* shortly following his accession to the presidency of the NSL, Lord Roberts called for a system of mandatory military training rather than compulsory military service. The latter was, he recognised, “as distasteful to the nation as it is incompatible with the conditions of an Army like ours”.<sup>36</sup> Yet few of his opponents accepted the legitimacy of this distinction. One article in the *Saturday Review* accused Roberts of wilful duplicity, pointing out that ‘mandatory service’ “if it means anything, means a form of conscription”.<sup>37</sup>

This sense of national ideological opposition made compulsory military service a toxic party-political issue. However vehement the campaigners for compulsion were, their scheme was the victim, in Michael Allison’s view, of “the near-impossibility in a democratic society of implementing...a measure which is electorally unpopular”.<sup>38</sup> The prospect of military compulsion being adopted by one of the main political parties thus remained unlikely throughout the Edwardian years. Though various politicians openly professed their support for some form of compulsory service legislation, usually within the Unionist fold, any such

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<sup>34</sup> Flynn, *Conscription and Democracy*, p. 12.

<sup>35</sup> G. G. Coulton, *A Strong Army in a Free State* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent and Co., 1900), p. 8. Taking among other examples English mobilisation during the Hundred Years War, “an army trained by the completest system of compulsory service organised by a first-rate European power until modern times”, Coulton identifies compulsory military service as having a clear precedent in English history.

<sup>36</sup> F-M Roberts, ‘The Army – as It Was and as It Is’, *The Nineteenth Century*, 57.335 (1905), p. 24.

<sup>37</sup> ‘The Wisdom of Lord Roberts’, *Saturday Review*, 99.2567 (1905), p. 8.

<sup>38</sup> Allison, ‘The National Service Issue 1899-1914’, p. 245.

scheme had become a party-political impossibility. In the same way that inconsistent commitment to tariff reform had branded the Conservatives “with the stigma of economic apostasy”, a similar commitment to military reform was far too big a risk to contemplate.<sup>39</sup> As Asquith later remarked, such a decision “would have split the Cabinet, split the House of Commons, split both political parties, and split the nation.”<sup>40</sup> Compulsion was widely seen as a European convention unsuited to Britain, threatening the jealously guarded voluntary principle that produced such a rush of recruits in 1914. Campaign groups such as the NSL that urged the abandonment of this principle thus occupied the political extremes, representing what Raymond Williams described as “both a symptom and an agent of militarism in Edwardian society”.<sup>41</sup> Though the nature of pre-1914 British militarism was arguably distinct from its German equivalent, the compulsory service campaign remained detrimentally associated with German militarism throughout the Edwardian period.<sup>42</sup>

The campaign also suffered from its close association with popular invasion scares and the ongoing inter-service rivalry concerning national defence. As Howard Moon’s thesis ‘The Invasion of the United Kingdom’ records in great detail, how best to defend Britain from possible invasion was a question that elicited fierce disagreement between the Admiralty and the War Office. Five exhaustive Committee of Imperial Defence (CID) inquiries commissioned between 1902 and 1914 often became the forum for this strategic debate. While the ‘Blue Water’ school believed that a large, well-funded Navy rendered foreign invasion impossible, those opposed argued that a ‘Bolt from the Blue’ invading force could conceivably make it past Britain’s naval defences, and thanks to the lack of a large standing army, would be met by no significant military resistance. The inquiry of 1907 provides a good example of how this debate regularly descended into recrimination and acrimony, in this case between the First Sea Lord John Fisher and Charles à Court Repington, military

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<sup>39</sup> Adams and Poirier, *The Conscription Controversy in Great Britain*, p. 22.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>41</sup> R. Williams, *Defending the Empire, The Conservative Party and British Defence Policy 1899-1915*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), p. 55.

<sup>42</sup> For more on the distinct character of British militarism see Summers, ‘Militarism in Britain before the Great War’, *History Workshop*, pp. 104-123.



correspondent for *The Times* and disgraced former Army officer. In September the latter refuted several items of negative correspondence in his regular newspaper column. Repington argued that Britain's long-term security depended on universal military training, and those who opposed such measures should be regarded "as public enemies, and as men who richly deserve the fate which their folly and blindness would inflict upon their fellow citizens".<sup>43</sup> Responding in kind to Repington and other critics including the editor of the *National Review* Leo Maxse, Fisher urged his countrymen in a speech in November to "Sleep quiet in yours beds",

...and do not be disturbed by these bogeys – invasion and otherwise – which are being periodically resuscitated by all sorts of leagues (laughter)...This afternoon I read the effusions of a red-hot and most charmingly interesting magazine editor (Maxse)...that an army of 100,000 German soldiers had been practising embarking in the German fleet...These stories are not only silly, they are mischievous".<sup>44</sup>

Fisher's derision was based on his understanding of British naval defence policy. Maintain the 'two-power standard', or a similar commitment to Dreadnought superiority, and invasion would remain a chimera, as the transportation of sufficient numbers of enemy troops would not be possible. Though the final report of the CID inquiry accepted that an invasion or raid was "not sufficiently remote to be ignored", the prospects of success appeared to remain extremely marginal.<sup>45</sup>

The campaign for compulsory military service, then, stood on the edge of acceptable politics throughout the Edwardian period. An introspective legacy of the South African War, the movement was backed by a wide range of influential and enthusiastic supporters, and through the NSL generated a notable degree of public support. Yet the organisation and its campaign never became truly popular in character, as it struggled to surmount what Flynn has described as Britain's "anticonscription mentality". This mentality may have been based,

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<sup>43</sup> 'German Naval Policy', *The Times* (11<sup>th</sup> October 1907), p. 8.

<sup>44</sup> 'The Guildhall Banquet', *The Times* (11<sup>th</sup> November 1907), p. 11.

<sup>45</sup> Moon, 'The Invasion of the United Kingdom', p. 375.

as critics such as Coulton asserted, on repetition and assumption rather than any firm evidence of national opinion. Politicians across the spectrum nevertheless treated ‘conscription’ as a toxic political issue to be left well alone, as it challenged the “Englishman’s constitutional birthright” of military exemption.<sup>46</sup> The compulsory service campaign also suffered from several negative associations, such as with the much maligned concept of German militarism and the acrimonious inter-service rivalry then informing Britain’s strategic defence policy. This vision of military reform, then, was a highly significant but ultimately peripheral element of Edwardian discourse. By contrast, the compulsory service campaign occupied a central point in Edwardian invasion literature. The following section will explore this status in more detail, addressing the ideological relationship between invasion narratives and military reform, and exploring the broader socio-political visions of compulsory service advocates.

### 3.4 – The Need for Conscription: Britain’s Social Perils

Edwardian invasion literature was written almost exclusively by advocates of compulsory military service. This advocacy requires some degree of explanation, insofar as it takes place at three different levels. The first of these levels consists of those authors who were members of the NSL, and thus directly associated with the compulsory service campaign. This group includes A. J. Dawson, who as is mentioned above was an active member of the league’s London branch, as well as Coulson Kernahan, B. S. Townroe, and Colonel L. A. Hale. William Le Queux is also thought to have been a league member, though direct evidence of this, as for many details of his secretive life, is scarce.<sup>47</sup> The

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<sup>46</sup> Williams, *Defending the Empire*, p. 7.

<sup>47</sup> Kernahan devoted a large amount of time and effort to the NSL, and even refused to accept remuneration and expenses, J. Adams, ‘Kernahan, (John) Coulson (1858-1943)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/52461?docPos=1> (accessed 20<sup>th</sup> March 2014). See also ‘Obituary, Mr Coulson Kernahan: a versatile writer’, *The Times* (19<sup>th</sup> February 1943), p. 7, and C. Kernahan, *An Author in the Territorials* (London: Jarrold and Sons, 1908). Aside from writing the invasion-scare play *A Nation in Arms*

second level of authorial support consists of explicit advocates of compulsory service who appear not to have been members of the NSL, a large group that includes James Blyth and George Griffith.<sup>48</sup> The third and final group covers authors whose position on the aims of the campaign is more complex. Many writers such as Walter Wood, E. E. Mills, and the pseudonymous 'General Staff' appear through their invasion narratives to have promoted the principle of military reform, yet their personal positions on the matter are difficult to ascertain. This is largely because most of the examples in this third group suffer from a lack of detailed biographical information. Therefore, while the vast majority of invasion narratives endorse the campaign for compulsory service, these three levels of advocacy naturally shape the extent to which firm conclusions can be drawn.

The widespread support of compulsory military service among the invasion literature authorship is one manifestation of a literary ideology heavily influenced by 'Radical Right' ideas. Another related example of 'Radical Right' sentiment in invasion narratives is a commonly-expressed contempt for parliamentary democracy. This position combined Gladstonian principles of 'the rule of the best' with various elements of the multi-faceted national efficiency campaign, such as the technocratic thinking of the Fabians and the concept of the 'Cult of the Expert'.<sup>49</sup> It also emerged from a less specific anxiety over the enervating influence of mass control. Put bluntly by one of Griffith's characters in *The World*

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(London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co., 1909), B. S. Townroe spoke regularly at NSL-organised meeting in Cheshire and Lancashire, see 'News from the Branches', *The Nation in Arms*, 6.5 (1911), p. 265. Townroe also regularly exchanged letters with Lord Derby and John St. Loe Strachey, both strong supporters of the compulsory service campaign, Bernard Stephen Townroe correspondence and papers, 1909-1955, courtesy of C. Townroe. Colonel Hale, as discussed above, was involved with the league from its inception. Several studies of William Le Queux explicitly state that he joined the NSL, including C. Patrick and S. Baister in *William Le Queux, Master of Mystery* (Chippenham: Antony Rowe, 2007), p. 54, but little evidence is cited. Undoubtedly an advocate of compulsory service, Le Queux arguably operated on the fringes rather than at the centre of the NSL, especially when compared to the above authors.

<sup>48</sup> Three of Blyth's four invasion narratives call for some system of compulsory military service (with *The Swoop of the Vulture* stressing the importance of the Navy in defence against invasion). Though Griffith's position is slightly less explicit, his final work *The Lord of Labour* (London: F. V. White and Co., 1911) comes out strongly for this campaign, even depicting Lord Roberts in the narrative. Yet neither men seem to have been members of the NSL.

<sup>49</sup> G. R. Searle, *The Quest for National Efficiency: A Study in British Politics and Political Thought, 1899-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971). pp. 54-106. See also J. Rose, 'The Efficiency Men', in *The Edwardian Temperament* (Athens OH: Ohio University Press, 1986), pp. 117-162.

*Peril of 1910* (1907), “There has never been an instance in history in which democracy did not spell degeneration.”<sup>50</sup> Such thinking considered Parliament, and at its apogee Government, to be representative of Britain’s structural incompetence and amateurism. In envisaging how these problems might be addressed, the British tradition of representative democracy was effectively a nuisance, “apt to obstruct the work of intelligent social planners.”<sup>51</sup> Reflecting this sentiment, much of the authorship held Britain’s parliamentary system, and particularly the lower chamber, in very low regard. A “House of Talkers...blown to and fro by every wind of popular emotion”, and elected by “the least educated and most short-sighted people in the nation”, the Commons evidently had no place in an efficiently governed Britain.<sup>52</sup>

As such, Parliament is regularly circumvented in the fiction by the rise of a political strongman. This *Übermensch* trope emphasises the influence of Nietzsche on contemporary literature.<sup>53</sup> Such figures include Lord Eagleton of *The Death Trap* (1907), Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, who the King appoints as military dictator following the formal surrender of the Government. “Ruthless, merciless, tremendous in will-power, a great organiser, [and] a clever strategist”, Eagleton saves Britain both from German invasion and from “the futile and treacherous policy of her so-called statesmen”.<sup>54</sup> A similar character is Lord Sudbury from James Blyth’s *The Peril of Pines Place* (1912). Described by his admirers as “the only strong man in England”, his role in thwarting dual threats of invasion and revolution see him heralded as “the Atlas who held up the might of England on his square, upright shoulders”.<sup>55</sup> This courting of political strongmen, or what Cecil Chesterton had earlier called “popular Caesarism”, indicates how far many of the authorship had drifted

<sup>50</sup> G. Griffith, *The World Peril of 1910* (London: F. V. White and Co., 1907), p. 119.

<sup>51</sup> Rose, *The Edwardian Temperament*, p. 126.

<sup>52</sup> E. E. Mills, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire* (Oxford: Alden and Co., 1905), p. 6, *World Peril of 1910*, p. 119.

<sup>53</sup> F. Bridgham, ed, *The First World War as a Clash of Cultures* (Rochester NY: Camden House, 2006), p. 15. See also J. Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses, Pride and Prejudice Among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880-1939* (Chicago: Academy Chicago, 2002), pp. 3-22.

<sup>54</sup> R. W. Cole, *The Death Trap* (1907), in I. F. Clarke, ed, *British Future Fiction, Vol. 7: Disasters to Come* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2001), pp. 78 and 313.

<sup>55</sup> J. Blyth, *The Peril of Pines Place* (London: F. V. White and Co., 1912), pp. 203 and 251.

from the parliamentary Conservative fold. Far from toeing the party line, some proposed the abolition of the political system itself.<sup>56</sup>

Another common theme of Edwardian invasion literature was the ongoing controversy over the sacrosanct economic status of free trade. Tariff reform, it should be stressed, was by no means the preserve of the 'Radical Right'. Indeed, preferential imperial tariffs formed the basis of Conservative economic policy in the party's electoral campaign of January 1910.<sup>57</sup> The debate had, however, opened a deep schism in British Conservatism during the Edwardian era, and provided "as much a symbol of confusion as innovation in Conservative politics".<sup>58</sup> It is thus interesting to note that the authors of invasion narratives, or at least those narratives in which the economic debate is discussed, were tariff reformers almost to a man. To such detractors free trade was dogmatic, short-sighted, and tied to the "insidious principles of Bright and Cobden".<sup>59</sup> Returning to *The Message*, the staunch advocate of imperial federation A. J. Dawson heavily criticises what he calls "our Quixotic fiscal policy".<sup>60</sup> In a chapter entitled 'The Dear Loaf', his protagonist Dick Mordan laments Britain's post-invasion industrial collapse with the following assertion:

If the spirit of Richard Cobden walked the earth at that time...it must have found food for bitter reflection in the hundreds of empty factories, grass-grown courtyards, and broken-windowed warehouses, which a single day's walk would show one in the north of England.<sup>61</sup>

Free trade was blamed here, as in Le Queux's *The Unknown Tomorrow* (1910), for allowing "goods into England cheaper than England could produce them".<sup>62</sup> In Horace Newte's *The Master Beast* (1907), set in a dystopian future of totalitarian socialism, the narrator argues during a debate concerning historical social inequalities that had Britain "gone in for Tariff

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<sup>56</sup> C. Chesterton, *Gladstonian Ghosts* (London: S. C. Brown Langham and Co., 1900), p. 230.

<sup>57</sup> E. H. H. Green, *The Crisis of Conservatism, the Politics, Economics and Ideology of the British Conservative Party, 1880-1914*, (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 20.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> 'From the New Gibbon', *Blackwood's Magazine*, 165.1000 (1899), p. 243.

<sup>60</sup> *The Message*, p. 11.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p.180.

<sup>62</sup> W. Le Queux, *The Unknown Tomorrow: How the Rich Fared at the Hands of the Poor Together with a Full Account of the Social Revolution in England* (London: F. V. White and Co., 1910), p. 92.

Reform the British workpeople would have been, not only as prosperous and well off as the Germans in a like condition, but they would have had the liberty that was theirs thrown in".<sup>63</sup> Where free trade was deemed an outdated, inflexible, and most of all a Liberal article of faith, tariff reform appeared a proactive and necessary measure to avoid economic eclipse.

One popular principle of the 'Radical Right' to which the compulsory service campaign was consistently linked was the fear of physical degeneration. Rooted in late-Victorian concerns over the health of Britain's predominantly urban populace (notably investigated in studies by Charles Booth in London, and later, Seebohm Rowntree in York) and famously explored in Max Nordau's cultural analysis *Degeneration* (1892), it was not until the South African War that these fears gathered popular momentum. In the introspective national climate triggered by Britain's disastrous military performance, the poor health of Regular Army applicants became a major cause of concern. Set out by Arnold White in his polemical work *Efficiency and Empire* (1901), a memorandum issued by the Army Medical Services in 1903 explored the controversial claim that 60 per cent of all Army applicants were being turned away on the grounds of poor health. Asserting that such figures confirmed "the gradual deterioration of the physique of the working classes from whom the bulk of the recruits must always be drawn", the author gravely warned that no nation could remain strong and free "when the army it put into the field no longer represented its own virility and manhood."<sup>64</sup> When a reluctant Home Office sanctioned an official inquiry into the matter, the conclusions drawn in the 'Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration' were less pessimistic. Recognising the desperate poverty and ill-health of a large section of the urban working classes, the Committee emphasised the distinction between "physical degeneracy" and "inherited retrogressive deterioration", arguing that there was "every reason to anticipate RAPID amelioration of physique so soon as improvement occurs in external conditions, particularly as regards food,

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<sup>63</sup> H. W. C. Newte, *The Master Beast* (London: Rebman, 1907), p. 204.

<sup>64</sup> House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, 'Memorandum by the Director-General, Army Medical Service, on the Physical Unfitness of Men Offering Themselves for Enlistment in the Army' (1903), Cd.1501, pp. 3-5.

clothing, [and] overcrowding".<sup>65</sup> Poverty rather than racial degeneration was concluded to be at the route of the South African War's recruitment fiasco.

Despite this official refutation, the fear of degeneracy remained a staple part of the vocabulary of alarmism for much of the Edwardian period, particularly among the authors of invasion literature. William Le Queux's highly successful *The Invasion of 1910* (1906), for example, treats physical degeneration as an accepted fact rather than a debated concept. Echoing the recent recruitment experience of the South African War, the narrative reports how in the rush to the colours that follows invasion many potential recruits are turned away due to ill-health, destined "to swell the mobs of hungry idlers."<sup>66</sup> In the work's closing summary, Le Queux associates this phenomenon with degeneracy, identifying it as part of the negative influence of industrialisation on the health of the British populace. Lamenting the decline of the traditional peasantry, "who were the backbone of the nation", he describes their ancestors as "the weak, excitable population of the towns".<sup>67</sup> This theme of rural strength and urban weakness is developed in *The Tyranny* (1907) by James Blyth. Speaking in the opening pages of "the ruin of the country", the work depicts a near-future where "old England's marrow had been sucked from the bones of her villages". This is a society ravaged by depression, in which "thousands of sturdy husbandmen have been driven from their holdings" through economic migration into the burgeoning slums of towns and cities. Romanticising rural traditionalism at the expense of urban modernity, Blyth's utopian conclusion envisages the return "of a yeoman England...with stalwart, russet-cheeked sons and daughters, fit to work, to fight, and to love."<sup>68</sup>

This fear of physical degeneration took a variety of forms within Edwardian invasion literature, as will be explored below. What is important to stress at this stage is the longevity

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<sup>65</sup> House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, 'Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration' (1904), Cd.2175, p. 14. For a more detailed analysis of the report see D. Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder 1848-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 185.

<sup>66</sup> W. Le Queux, *The Invasion of 1910*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1906), p. 133.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 542.

<sup>68</sup> J. Blyth, *The Tyranny* (London: William Heinemann, 1907), pp. 2 and 273.

of these concerns, in spite of the conclusions of the Physical Deterioration Committee. Refusing to countenance the word 'degeneration', the Committee's report was, as Daniel Pick suggests, "a kind of English empiricist refutation of degenerationism."<sup>69</sup> The report did receive, it should be said, a certain amount of criticism over the legitimacy of its findings, largely surrounding a chronic lack of reliable data. As the first effort to assess the health of the urban population in its entirety, the inter-departmental committee had no figures with which to compare their findings, and as such, no real way of proving or disproving the existence of degeneracy. Complaining to this effect, the Director General of Army Medical Services suggested that the report itself was not worthwhile. What was needed was a way of accurately recording such data, not "a royal commission to listen to more unsubstantiated conjecture about the faltering vigour of the race".<sup>70</sup> Whether of empirical value or not, the report ultimately failed to discredit the concept of degeneration. Instead, its existence became a point of reference for advocates of racial decline, a governmental confirmation that questions needed to be asked. This thematic longevity, then, is best approached in terms of long-term authorial concerns, as it provides no more vindication of the basic tenets of such theories than the Physical Deterioration Report itself. As Soloway affirms, such degeneration fears "tell us much more about middle and upper-class perceptions...about change...than they do about the physical, social and biological realities".<sup>71</sup>

One such perception concerned the degenerative effects of urbanisation. Britain's urban society was often presented in invasion literature as exercising a series of highly negative effects on the national character, as is discussed in the previous chapter. Aside from such general criticism, many authors of invasion narratives coloured their visions of urban life with detailed descriptions of the poor health of the average city dweller. This was particularly common in depictions of the capital, and specifically the working class East End. Returning to *The Message*, Dick Mordan recalls a conversation with "an overworked servant

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<sup>69</sup> Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, p. 185.

<sup>70</sup> Quoted in R. Soloway, 'Counting the Degenerates: The Statistics of Race Deterioration in Edwardian England', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 17.1 (1982), p. 149.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.





*Figure 3.1* - H. M. Brock, 'The Roaring City', in A. J. Dawson, *The Message* (Boston MA: Dana Estes and Co., 1907), p. 40. The second of Brock's illustrations included in this thesis, 'The Roaring City' represents Dick Mordan's move from Dorset to London. Though as yet unaware of the hardships of city life, Dawson's protagonist was soon to learn "that hundreds of men of far wider experience and greater ability than mine were wearily tramping London's pavements at that moment, longing, questing bitterly for work" (p. 40). Such urban struggle is well captured by Brock, with ashen-faced pedestrians jostling for space alongside hansom cabs and buses, newspaper hawkers and couriers. 'London's pavements' are invisible, entirely obscured by this mass of human and vehicular traffic. Silhouetted against the bleak, hazy sky are the outlines of "the cat-infested chimney pots of Bloomsbury", criss-crossed by telegraph wires and dominated by a blurry, half-forgotten church. This scene and its figures seem to represent what Dawson describes as "the rural exodus", in which healthy country folk were drawn to the city and its opportunities, only to be trapped by "the hiving streets, with their chances, their flaunting vice, their incessant bustle, and their innumerable drinking bars" (p. 55).

at my lodging", a recent migrant to the city from the Dorset countryside, who had "quickly acquired the London muddiness of complexion...in the semi-subterranean life she led".<sup>72</sup> This image of London is one where the city exerts a tangible and rapid influence on the health of its working populace (demonstrated in *Figure 3.1*). As Charles Gleig describes in his story of naval blockade-induced famine *When All Men Starve* (1898), the "murky, smoke-stained atmosphere" of London was one where "some odd millions...toiled, moiled, sweated, shivered and ran the whole gamut of squalid urban life."<sup>73</sup> In the similarly focused *Starved into Surrender* (1904) the author C. A. Clarke, a Lancastrian journalist, offers an unusual regionalist perspective. The novel begins in St Petersburg at a meeting of a number of Tsarist agents, recently returned from reconnaissance work in Britain, who take turns to describe the regional peculiarities of the country's widespread degeneration. While southern English labourers are "ignorant and servile", their northern counterparts are described as "stunted...[and] bloodless – a real healthy face is a rarity". The Welsh, "a conquered breed, are cowardly, yet cunning", while the workers of the Midlands "are a dwarfed, shrunken, perishing horde". Concluding these damning assessments, one of the agents tellingly raises the issue of military defence, "I should not like to face war with an army of such weaklings."<sup>74</sup>

The perception of degeneration within Edwardian invasion literature, however, was not always interpreted through short-term socio-political matters, such as the fall-out of the South African War, the threat of naval blockade, or the prospect of imminent invasion. Instead, degeneration is often represented as a deterministic indicator of long-term inexorable national decline. One of the more lurid examples of this kind is the illustratively

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<sup>72</sup> *The Message*, pp. 53-54.

<sup>73</sup> C. Gleig, *When All Men Starve* (London and New York: J. Lane, 1898), p. 2. Gleig's work is one of several 'starvation narratives' within this project's sample, in which an enemy naval blockade sees Britain facing privation and famine, thanks to the country's reliance on importing the majority of its foodstuffs. This much-discussed fear was one of the primary arguments of the Blue Water School for the need to consistently increasing naval expenditure. See Moon, 'The Invasion of the United Kingdom', p. 272.

<sup>74</sup> C. A. Clarke, *Starved into Surrender* (London: C. W. Daniel, 1904), pp. 9-11. Clarke's vision of a Russian intelligence meeting draws parallels with R. C. T. Evans's later work *Britain's Peril* (London: New Goswell Printing Co., 1914). Imagining a meeting between Kaiser Wilhelm and his Chiefs of Naval and Military Staff, the narrative provides the details of how Germany's intended invasion is to take place, and highlights the nature of British failings that have allowed such plans to be made.

titled *Decline and Fall of the British Empire*. Originally published anonymously in 1905, the author was E. E. Mills, described by Samuel Hynes as "a young Tory pamphleteer...just down from Oxford, where he had prepared himself by taking a fourth-class degree in history".<sup>75</sup> Styled as a Japanese school textbook of the year 2005, the pamphlet set out, in the words of its subtitle, "a brief account of those causes which resulted in the destruction of our late Ally, together with a comparison between the British and Roman Empires."<sup>76</sup> Though unusual in format, it was not the first work alluding to Edward Gibbon's celebrated study of Roman decline. Six years earlier, an article had been printed in *Blackwood's Magazine* entitled 'From the New Gibbon' that seems to have heavily influenced Mills.<sup>77</sup> Earlier still in 1884 the pamphlet *History of the Decline and Fall of the British Empire* had appeared, attributed to one 'Edwarda Gibbon' and purportedly published in New Zealand in 2884.<sup>78</sup> Regardless of this imaginative debt the later work achieved far greater success, selling 16,000 copies in six months, including one to the hero of Mafeking Robert Baden-Powell, over whom it is thought to have made a significant impression.<sup>79</sup>

Where Rome had fallen "at the hands of vigorous Barbarians", Mills's near-future Britain had fallen at the hands of Germany and Russia. Both, however, owed their collapse as much to internal political problems as they did to powerful foreign enemies. "If the truth be told", exhorts the narrator, such is "the state of those great Empires which fail to realise God's law concerning the survival of the fittest and lose their faith and pristine virility."<sup>80</sup> Mills directly equates urbanisation with degeneration, identifying it as part of a process through

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<sup>75</sup> S. Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 24.

<sup>76</sup> *Decline and Fall of the British Empire*.

<sup>77</sup> They are certainly similar enough in style and content to suggest that Mills had read the former article. See 'From the New Gibbon', *Blackwood's Magazine*, pp. 241-249.

<sup>78</sup> Edwarda Gibbon, pseud., 'History of the Decline and Fall of the British Empire', *Ye Leadenhalle Presse Pamphlets*, 1 (1884). This unusual pamphlet identifies the Egyptian crisis and the death of General Gordon (1885) as the beginning of Britain's Imperial decline. A series of foreign policy disasters follow. India erupts in revolution; the US occupies Ireland; Austria seizes Egypt; France annexes the Channel Islands; and Spain reconquers Gibraltar. Finally, "a sudden divergence of the Gulf Stream" sees Britain's climate become closer "to those of Labrador and the Hudson Bay territory", p. 23.

<sup>79</sup> G. Searle, *A New England? Peace and War, 1886-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), p. 302.

<sup>80</sup> *Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, p. 45.

which Britain's "sturdy yeoman dwindled into nothingness."<sup>81</sup> In a forced compromise of standards, the narrative records how the Army lowered its minimum height and chest measurement requirements, as well as reducing the weight of the standard issue rifle. Britain's pool of potential recruits, then, was clearly in the doldrums. Yet Mills is also critical of contemporary welfare proposals intended to address such physical deficiencies. Efforts at social reform are dismissed as "municipal extravagance", based "on principles which will be recognised by the smallest office-boy in Tokio as ignoring the mere elements of political economy."<sup>82</sup> Throughout the work Mills warns of the dangers of this "false philanthropy". Far from extracting a useful social function from its populace, this prophetic British society suffers for a misplaced liberal principle that "every sorry child of sloth and ignorance had an unreasoning right to do exactly what he pleased."<sup>83</sup> Despite a curious combination of historical precedent and near-future speculation, the *Decline and Fall of the British Empire* was primarily a scathing analysis of the Edwardian present. This status is confirmed by an advert printed in *The Speaker* for one of the many subsequent editions of the work. Harnessing a glowing endorsement from Baden-Powell, the General's words instruct prospective readers to buy a copy of the pamphlet, and to

carefully study it with a view to seeing where it applies to you personally...each one of you, no matter what his line of life may be, will see what should be his share in saving his country from the possibility of disaster.<sup>84</sup>

*The Decline and Fall of the British Empire* is a highly significant example of invasion literature. Unusual in format, and the last in a short line of narratives modelled on Edward Gibbon's seminal study, the work also highlights an important change in the way in which Rome was popularly utilised. During the high-Victorian period, where Britain's global

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., pp. 31 and 19.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>84</sup> 'Patriotism and Sixpence', *The Speaker* (10<sup>th</sup> November 1906), p. 161.

economic predominance was shifting towards a more overtly political imperialism, some began to see Britain as the natural inheritor of Imperial Rome. The celebrated imperialist and future Viceroy of India Lord Curzon, for example, referred in 1898 to the “living influence of the empire of Rome”, and stressed that Britain’s successful colonial policy was indebted to the Roman imperial model.<sup>85</sup> For Victorian advocates of Empire, as Raymond Betts explains, the Roman comparison provided “pleasing undertones to the litany of new imperialism”, laying a foundation myth through which the British nation could “come to terms with, incorporate and transcend the Roman achievement.”<sup>86</sup> The elevation of Victoria to Empress of India in 1876 can be seen as the high water mark of such thinking, a constitutional confirmation of the nation’s imperial responsibilities.

Yet by the death of Victoria in 1901, the introspection characteristic of post-South African War Britain had transformed the myth of Rome from a positive inheritance into a cautionary tale of imminent disaster. Not only a prominent theme in Edwardian invasion narratives, this Roman simile of inevitable collapse appeared in a variety of forms and circumstances, ranging from high-profile socio-political analyses through to district trade union meetings.<sup>87</sup> The pseudo-science of A. J. Hubbard’s millennial study *The Fate of Empires* (1913) offers an interesting case in point. Hubbard emphasises the “geocentric” quality of the advanced stages of ‘civilisation’, where individual desires for happiness surpass a “cosmocentric” concern for the strength and longevity of one’s society. Like Ancient Rome before her, Edwardian Britain was seen to be rapidly approaching a terminal juncture, highlighted in Hubbard’s reference to the words of “the melancholy Emperor”

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<sup>85</sup> Lord Curzon, speech given on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1898, in R. F. Betts, ‘The Allusion to Rome in British Imperialist Language of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries’, *Victorian Studies*, 15.2 (1971), p. 152.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p201. See also N. Vance, *The Victorians and Ancient Rome* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), pp. 3-24.

<sup>87</sup> C. F. G. Masterman’s *The Condition of England* (London: Shenvall Press, 1960) refers to the decline of Rome in his analysis of Britain’s ruling classes, pp. 19-67. On 31st January 1902 the *Leamington Spa Courier* recorded its distaste that the chair of the district’s National Union of Teachers had cited “the Gibbonian peril” in reference to national attitudes on education. Despite disliking the alarmist comparison to Gibbon’s work, the paper did express its concern that the British population “have a notion that they are divinely endowed with a monopoly of supremacy”, p. 4.

Marcus Aurelius that “all things move in a circle”.<sup>88</sup> Though such writings were regularly dismissed as “insecure parallels and hasty assumptions”, these fears of inevitable decline painfully contrasted with an earlier Victorian confidence.<sup>89</sup>

What this shift in the symbolic value of Rome arguably highlights is that Edwardian fears of degeneration were not exclusively physical in nature. Of equal importance was what Geoffrey Harpham has identified as a *fin de siècle* sense of “cultural degeneration”. Britain’s intellectual climate prior to 1914 was characterised, in Harpham’s view, by feelings “of apprehension about national senescence, uncertainty about the boundaries of evolutionary progress, and forebodings of imminent cataclysm”. The explosion of invasion literature in this period, then, was one of many scientific, social, philosophical and literary manifestations of this peculiarly Edwardian anxiety.<sup>90</sup> Yet ultimately, as Hynes has argued, the common root of such anxieties “was the question of national and imperial defence”.<sup>91</sup> One way in which invasion narratives illustrate this argument is through their regular use of Germany as a point of socio-political comparison. Though the period is more commonly associated with rising levels of Germanophobia, a significant minority of Edwardian commentators encouraged emulation of Germany rather than its demonization. As Geoffrey Searle has explored, Germany was lauded by its British admirers as a model modern state, praised for its booming economy, its model conscript army, and its world-leading status in technical education. Consider the following tribute from the cabinet minister and prominent pro-German Richard Haldane:

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<sup>88</sup> A. J. Hubbard, *The Fate of Empires* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1913), p. 3.

<sup>89</sup> For a dismissive contemporary article see S. Low, ‘Is Our Civilisation Dying?’, *Fortnightly Review*, 93.556 (1913), p. 639.

<sup>90</sup> G. Harpham, ‘Time Running Out: The Edwardian Sense of Cultural Degeneration’, *Clio*, 5.3 (1976), p. 283.

<sup>91</sup> Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*, p. 34.

The spirit of the Germany of today is highly concrete and practical. But it is based on foundations of abstract knowledge, and that is why it is well-ordered...The country that has produced a Kant and a Goethe can later on produce a Bismarck".<sup>92</sup>

Even among its admirers, however, Germany often assumed the paradoxical role "of model and enemy". The German threat, therefore, "could be fended off only through an adoption of her own methods and institutions".<sup>93</sup>

Images of physical or cultural degeneration in British invasion narratives were consistently modelled on the above paradigm, such as in *The Way of War* (1907) by the pseudonymous Hew Scot. The novel follows the adventures of two Scotsmen named Jim Webb and Frank Reval. Having unearthed an invasion plot focused on the Firth of Forth, the men travel to Germany on a mission of amateur espionage. Despite the aggressive machinations of Germany, Webb is generous in his praise of the German people, "they have a wonderful power of concentration and a plodding carefulness and accuracy which I wish I saw more of here."<sup>94</sup> Arousing military suspicions shortly after arriving in Germany, Webb and Reval board a train at Berlin aiming for Hamburg and the Danish border. Unfortunately for them, they are apprehended en route by the celebrated German spy Else Becker. During a conversation with her captives regarding the motivations behind the German invasion plot, she bursts into animated contempt:

I hate the English...you are a conceited and arrogant people. Degeneracy has seized you, and the virility of your race is gone...You are decadent. Your sun is setting – nay, has almost set.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> R. B. Haldane, 'Introductory Note', in J. H. Rose, C. H. Herdord, E. C. K. Gonner, and M. E. Sadler, *Germany in the Nineteenth Century, Five Lectures* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1912), vii-viii.

<sup>93</sup> Searle, *The Quest for National Efficiency*, pp. 54-57. See also R. Scully, *British Images of Germany: Admiration, Antagonism and Ambivalence* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), pp. 83-119, and for literature more broadly, G. Argyle, *Germany as Model and Monster: Allusions in English Fiction, 1830s-1930s* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002).

<sup>94</sup> 'Hew Scot', pseud., *The Way of War* (London: John Long, 1907), p. 83.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p219.

Becker's anger appears not to be directed at the impertinence of her prisoners, but at contemptible British political attitudes, and the overriding sense that an equivalent invasion plot against Germany could never have got so far. Hew Scot arguably is not suggesting, as one highly critical review put it, "that he is the very person to awaken England to her responsibilities".<sup>96</sup> Instead it is Germany that fulfils this function, both as a model example and as a military threat.

Such Anglo-German comparisons were particularly forthcoming in discussions of the physical health of the German working class. Writing to the *Daily Mail* in July 1907, the Anglican Bishop for North and Central Europe Thomas Wilkinson spoke at length of his admiration "for Germany and everything German". He reserved special praise for what he perceived as a lack of poverty in German cities, unlike their British equivalents:

In German cities there are neither slums, squalor, nor rags. Such a condition of things as is permitted here in England...wretched tenements, fetid alleys, overcrowded dwellings...would be impossible in Germany...Sound, healthy, industrious humanity is far too valuable an asset in that great military country to permit of such a degenerating state of things.<sup>97</sup>

If Germany had, as Wilkinson suggests, refined her working class into a demographic asset, Britain's urban population was feared to be in a condition of advanced degeneracy. Such contrasts in British and German 'qualities' were explored further by H. G. Wells in *The War in the Air* (1909). Though an amiable character, Wells describes his anti-hero Bert Smallways as "a vulgar little creature, the sort of pert, limited soul that the old civilisation of the early twentieth century produced by the million".<sup>98</sup> As global aerial warfare breaks out, Smallways inexplicably finds himself on-board the German flagship as it crosses the Atlantic to bombard New York. During this uninvited stay his German cabin companion regularly vents his frustration at having to bunk with the English guest, "you'd better clear out Smallways. I

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<sup>96</sup> 'The Way of War', *The Academy*, 1836 (13<sup>th</sup> July 1907), p. 682.

<sup>97</sup> 'Up-To-Date Germany', *Daily Mail*, (11<sup>th</sup> July 1907), p. 6.

<sup>98</sup> H. G. Wells, *The War in the Air* (New York: Boni and Liveright, inc., 1917), p. 204.



can't stand you here this morning. You're so infernally ugly and useless."<sup>99</sup> The exemplification of "the under-educated, misinformed Englishman", the comparison of Smallways to his physically superior German hosts must have appeared worryingly unfavourable for patriotic British readers.<sup>100</sup>

These varying shades of degeneracy fears - the physical weakness of potential Army recruits, the negative impact of urbanisation, the simile of Roman decline, and unfavourable comparisons with ascendant Germany - all were British expressions of an increasingly influential, pan-European language of social Darwinism. Yet such patterns of thought are difficult to thematically isolate. Paul Crook has defined the concept as a collection of "extreme brands of biological determinism". Emerging out of a late-nineteenth century rejection of scientific rationalism, this broad church of ideas purported a reductionist, violent, and crudely hereditarian understanding of human evolution.<sup>101</sup> That the majority of subscribers to such ideas were unfamiliar with the writing of Darwin was in some ways inconsequential. The self-perpetuating nature of such loaded phrases as 'the struggle for existence' and 'the survival of the fittest' created a situation whereby "one need not have read any of these authors in order to be ideologically influenced by them."<sup>102</sup> Many contributors to Edwardian invasion literature can be grouped in this bracket of half-cocked Darwinians, as highlighted by the literature's regular degeneracy themes. Some authors, however, engage with these ideas in a far more direct manner. For Robert Cole in *The Death Trap*, social Darwinism is "that inexorable law of the universe which enacts that the fittest survive".<sup>103</sup> Curiously, he makes no effort to distinguish this from religious

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p272.

<sup>100</sup> C. D. Eby, *The Road to Armageddon: The Martial Spirit in English Popular Literature* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1907), p. 48.

<sup>101</sup> P. Crook, *Darwinism, War and History, the Debate over the Biology of War from 'Origin of Species' to the First World War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 163, and 200-206. See also G. Moore, 'Darwinism and National Identity, 1870-1918', in Bridgham, ed, *The First World War as a Clash of Cultures*, pp167-182, and I. F. Clarke, 'Forecasts of Warfare in Fiction 1803-1914', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 10.1 (1967), pp. 7-10.

<sup>102</sup> H. W. Koch, 'Social Darwinism and the New Imperialism', in *The Origins of the First World War, Great Power Rivalry and German War Aims*, (London: MacMillan, 1972), p. 331.

<sup>103</sup> *The Death Trap*, in Clarke, ed, *British Future Fiction, Vol. 7: Disasters to Come*, p. 178.

understanding, later referencing “The God who designed that the laws of evolution should govern the universe”.<sup>104</sup> Mills had previously expressed a similar sentiment in the *Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, describing evolution, “God’s unalterable law concerning the survival of the fittest” as equally applicable “to the life of a Nation as it is to the briefer existence of an animal or a human being.”<sup>105</sup> Such an analytical combination, where hereditary determinism meets omnipotent God, is indicative of the intellectual confusion that characterised popular concepts of social Darwinism.

A minority of early Edwardian invasion narratives, it should be noted, actively challenge anxieties over physical degeneration. G. R. Hall’s South African War-inspired narrative *The Black Fortnight* (1904) favourably compared the physique of the average Briton with French and Russian invaders. Despite poor naval preparation, British sailors are portrayed as having “a superiority in the physical stamina of the ordinary ratings, and in their mental calibre, the result of a hereditary aptitude for the sea and a generation of school-board training”.<sup>106</sup> On land, the British troops of *The Coming Waterloo* (1901) are “sturdy, broad-chested”, bronzed from time in the field, and man-for-man physically “far finer...than the average man who will be pitted against him”.<sup>107</sup> Frederic Maude’s *The New Battle of Dorking* (1900) confronts degeneration as a reactionary fallacy. A colonel in the Royal Engineers who wrote extensively on military history and tactics, Maude placed huge faith in the value of ‘the soldier’, “who has by resolute self-control mastered the sentimental weaknesses of his nature”.<sup>108</sup> Named for Chesney’s pioneering work, the narrative begins with a surprise French torpedo attack on Portsmouth dockyard, followed by the landing of an invading force. A combination of Irish reinforcements and plucky volunteers transpires to be more than enough to repel the enemy troops, as comprehensive victories are won at Chaldon Downs and, naturally, at Dorking. Musing over the British victory, the narrator

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 232.

<sup>105</sup> *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, p22.

<sup>106</sup> G. R. Hall, *The Black Fortnight; or, The Invasion of 1915* (London: Swann Sonnenschein and Co., 1904), p. 59.

<sup>107</sup> Capt. Cairnes, *The Coming Waterloo*, (London: Archibald and Constable, 1901), p. 48.

<sup>108</sup> F. N. Maude, *The New Battle of Dorking* (London: G. Richards, 1900), vii. For Maude see Kemp, Mitchell, and Trotter, *Edwardian Fiction*, p. 272, and Bleiler, *Science Fiction*, p. 485.

asserts that he “could not believe that we were as a race really degenerating. It was the fault of our training. Given a sufficient spur and properly led, our men were capable of anything.”<sup>109</sup> Britain has been caught cold and unprepared, but the “years of piping peace has not effaced”. The challenges of war thus encourage the highest form “of cheerful courage and self-sacrifice.”<sup>110</sup> Though disputing fears of degeneration, Maude was by no means immune to the intellectual pull of social Darwinism, as is highlighted by the tone of his edited collection of military history lectures *War and the World's Life* (1907),

‘We are governed by the spirits of our dead’, and I submit that this inherited instinct of self-sacrifice is so deeply ingrained in the race that the intellectual disturbances of the moment, whatever they may be from time to time, no more ruffle its foundation than the waves of a storm trouble the bed of an ocean.<sup>111</sup>

Whether authors were refuting or defending the concept of degeneracy, the major undercurrent of these representations in Edwardian invasion literature was the question of military organisation and preparation. By arguing that physical decline was a reality such narratives, as will be explored in more detail in the next section of this chapter, proposed compulsory military service as a necessary and long-overdue antidote. A second issue that was harnessed in this manner was the national popularity of sport and leisure. One illustrative example of how this cultural phenomenon was represented within invasion literature is Allen Upward’s satirical work *The Fourth Conquest of England* (1904). In Upward’s vision of rampant Catholicism the British public offer very little resistance. This inaction is attributed to the distracting influence of professional sport. Church disestablishment, for example, is lost in a simultaneous furore over a new and wildly unpopular tax on footballs.<sup>112</sup> In a similar form, as Edward VII is disposed and the Stuart pretender Mary III crosses the Channel, the public is placated by the appointment of C. B. Fry

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<sup>109</sup> *The New Battle of Dorking*, p. 184.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>111</sup> F. N. Maude, *War and the World's Life*, (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1907), p. 244.

<sup>112</sup> A. Upward, *The Fourth Conquest of England* (London: Tyndale Press, 1904), p. 27.

as the new Secretary for Sport.<sup>113</sup> The crowning moment of this absurd imagery is the behaviour of the Pope during his visit to crown the new Catholic Queen:

By an unfortunate contretemps the Papal fleet anchored in the Thames on the day of the Cup Final in Hyde Park. With consummate tact his Holiness declined to place himself in competition with this absorbing event, and postponed his landing for a day...The Pope's wise action was rewarded by the winning team proceeding in a body, attired in the manly costume of their game, to greet him on board his galley, an honour never before paid to any sovereign.<sup>114</sup>

For nothing in Edwardian society trumped the cultural importance of the Cup Final, not even the Bishop of Rome.

Upward's facetious language satirises a prevalent anxiety of invasion literature, that the British population was devoting too much time to sporting pursuits. The late-Victorian and Edwardian periods were undoubtedly golden ages for sport and leisure. The widespread codification of team sports, as well as the emergence of many other increasingly popular leisure activities, partly responded to changes in employment patterns, whereby the provision of 'free time' for recreation was becoming increasingly common.<sup>115</sup> The increasing cultural value of sport was something that exasperated both revolutionaries and reactionaries. While John Bruce Glasier of the Independent Labour Party complained during the 1890's that "Cycling, football, and other forms of personal recreation have cost us the zealous services of many admirable propagandists", Kipling's extraordinary diatribe 'The Islanders' saw him refer to "the flannelled fools at the wicket or the muddied oafs at the

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>115</sup> H. Cunningham, 'Leisure and Culture', in F. M. L. Thompson, *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950, Vol. 2: People and their Environment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 279-339. See also R. Holt, *Sport and the British: a Modern History* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press, 1992), J. A. Mangan, ed, *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism: British Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad 1700-1914* (London: Frank Cass, 1988), T. Mason, *Association Football and English Society 1863-1915* (Brighton: Harvester, 1980).

goals”.<sup>116</sup> By the outbreak of the First World War, this dedication to recreation had become something of a national ideology, to the extent that typically British habits frustrated their French allies. In particular, the British notion of ‘sporting spirit’ was interpreted as a “too calm...who-gives-a-damn attitude”, leading to the popular phrase *l'égoïsme anglais* – the selfish English. Even in war, the British attitude seemed wedded to ‘the game’.<sup>117</sup>

Despite responding in part to changes in mass recreational habits, the national ‘cult of games’ was predominantly a concept of the British elite. Sporting prowess and achievement was closely associated with the Victorian system of public schools, institutions W. J. Reader has described as “temples of the faith”.<sup>118</sup> One famous evocation of this link is Henry Newbolt’s poem ‘Vitaī Lampada’. Juxtaposing a school cricket match with a colonial battlefield, the poem emphasises the basic similarities of sport, war, and empire-building, coining the mantra “Play up! play up! and play the game!”<sup>119</sup> Echoing the efforts of G. G. Coulton to provide British conscription with a historical root, Newbolt argued that the goals of the public school had evolved from notions of medieval chivalry. “Athletics...the habit of out-of-door life; and the love of games” descended, in his view, from “tournaments and the chivalric rules of war.”<sup>120</sup> Tied in to these ideas was the mid-Victorian advent of ‘muscular Christianity’. Hoping to bring religion to the typically non-practising industrial workers and to encourage individual-driven improvements in the urban condition, sport could become “a source of bodily purification” through a programme of “practical Christianity.”<sup>121</sup> A forum had thus been provided in which the “interrelationship between school life, organised games, war and Christianity” helped cement an imperially-enthused ideology of sport.<sup>122</sup> This ideology

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<sup>116</sup> S. Pierson, *Marxism and the Origins of British Socialism: the Struggle for a New Consciousness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), p. 250, R. Kipling, ‘The Islanders’, *The Complete Verse* (London: Kyle Cathie, 1990), pp. 244-246.

<sup>117</sup> M. Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: the Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (London: Bantam, 1989), p. 125.

<sup>118</sup> A. J. Reader, *At Duty’s Call: A Study in Obsolete Patriotism*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), p. 83.

<sup>119</sup> H. Newbolt, *Collected Poems, 1897-1907*, (London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1910), pp. 131-2.

<sup>120</sup> Reader, *At Duty’s Call*, p. 93.

<sup>121</sup> Holt, *Sport and the British*, pp. 92-3.

<sup>122</sup> Reader, *At Duty’s Call*, p. 94.

was not without class and social schisms, despite various arguments to the contrary.<sup>123</sup> Nevertheless, it is hard to dispute that by the Edwardian period 'sport' had gained a significant national currency as one of "the most potent of the imperial elixirs".<sup>124</sup>

This spirit of the social and cultural value of sport is reflected in a minority of invasion narratives. The use of sporting metaphors and analogies is a particularly common trait, highlighted by this passage from Lloyd Williams' *The Great Raid* (1909). Summarising the British Army's progress during an important defensive stance against the German invaders, one soldier provides the following commentary:

"I don't consider as how the first innings is finished yet," he said impressively. "I should call this the luncheon interval. Now, my opinion is that the wicket's a-going to improve, and I shouldn't be surprised if...the runs come pretty free. You mark my words, there's goin' to be some leather-hunting."<sup>125</sup>

Similarly, in Patrick Vaux's narrative of Anglo-German naval war *The Shock of Battle* (1906), one Commander describes a decisive naval engagement as "the Grand Test Match".<sup>126</sup> An individual's sporting pedigree is regularly cited in such literature as a tribute to their bravery. The protagonist of *Ichabod* (1910) Noel Pettigrew, maths prodigy and inventor, is given further credence through his "good batting average" at school and university.<sup>127</sup> In turn, Hardross Courage of *The Secret* (1907) invokes cricket when the quality of his character is called into question by a suspicious hotel manager in the aftermath of a late-night brawl, "I am up in town to play for my county against the MCC at Lord's...my word as to what happened last night will be readily accepted."<sup>128</sup> To return to *The Way of War*, Jim Webb is idealised amongst his immediate associates through the memory "of a certain goal which he

<sup>123</sup> See in particular Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*, pp. 120-128, and Paris, *Warrior Nation*, p. 104. For a 'separate spheres' exploration of sport and class see Holt, *Sport and the British*, especially pp. 74-202.

<sup>124</sup> A. P. Thornton, *The Imperial Idea and its Enemies: a Study in British Power*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1985), p. 90.

<sup>125</sup> L. Williams, *The Great Raid* (1910), in Clarke, ed, *British Future Fiction, Vol. 7: Disasters to Come*, p. 443.

<sup>126</sup> P. Vaux, *The Shock of Battle* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam and Sons, 1906), p. 134.

<sup>127</sup> J. Blyth, *Ichabod* (London: John Milne, 1910), pp. 140-1.

<sup>128</sup> E. P. Oppenheim, *The Secret*, (London: Ward, Lock and Co., 1907), p. 20.

had once cleverly kicked while playing for the university”.<sup>129</sup> The spectator aspect of Edwardian football was also celebrated in places as a cultural commonality and class-unifier, rightly placed at the top of a man’s priorities. Whether in war or peace, on land or at sea, a “sensible Englishman” would begin reading his paper “at the column headed ‘football’”.<sup>130</sup>

Some commentators went even further, suggesting that this commitment to sport operated as a preferable alternative to compulsory military service, a peculiarly British method of social and physical conditioning. The “healthy athleticism” of the sport-playing British populace, wrote Headon Hill in his collection of short adventure stories *Seaward for the Foe* (1903), made “all young Britons soldiers now-a-days, in spirit if not in drill”. Hill’s British populace is portrayed as wholly unsuited to military compulsion. Hard-working, individualistic and naturally insular, Britons had little time “for brooding over grave national issues”, unlike militaristic Germans. As such, it was to be expected that the British “blend their patriotisms with their amusements.”<sup>131</sup> Hill was not alone in this sort of apologist sentiment. Welcoming the beginning of the new football season in 1895, an article in the specialist Sheffield paper *Football World* made the following claim:

an eminent German military authority...recently offered the opinion that it [football] satisfies a craving which renders conscription unnecessary in this country. It does not make trained soldiers of our young men, it is true, but it enhances in them a spirit of pluck, opposition, competition, never-know-when-they-are-beaten, never-say-die, play up Wednesday or United kind of feeling, which tends to the greatness of our national character. Long live football!<sup>132</sup>

Here, then, the question of national identity reemerges. Such quintessentially British virtues as spirit, pluck, and sportsmanship appear fundamentally tied to the experience of competitive sport. Just as German and French understandings of national identity had

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<sup>129</sup> *The Way of War*, p. 14.

<sup>130</sup> A. C. Curtis, *A New Trafalgar* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1902), p. 64.

<sup>131</sup> H. Hill, pseud., *Seaward for the Foe* (London: Ward, Lock and Co., 1903), pp. 120 and 136.

<sup>132</sup> Quoted in Mason, *Association Football and English Society, 1863-1915*, p. 225. Other commentators opposed conscription for similarly exceptionalist reasons. In M. P. Sheil’s highly racialised *The Yellow Danger*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Grant Richards, 1899), Britain’s efficient preparation for war is highly praised. “What conscription did for foreign countries”, the narrator asserts, “the manly mood of the race did for us”, p. 50.

become heavily shaped by the experience of conscription, sport allowed concepts of Britishness to be formed in opposition to compulsory military service.

For the majority of invasion literature authors, however, the British love for sport was a dangerous obsession. Incompatible with effectiveness and efficiency, such attitudes helped champion a typically British military amateurism. In the crudest representations of this theme, sport is emphasised as a distraction from the dangers of invasion. In the early chapters of *The Death Trap* the Prime Minister is playing golf at a course in Scotland, wilfully ignoring several emergency telegrams informing him of a German ultimatum. As he “hit the small white ball over the turf...the fate of the mighty British Empire trembled in the balance.” Deliberately absurd in nature, the scene revels in the premier’s “diabolical...neglect of duty” and the “utter disregard” displayed for the safety of his electorate.<sup>133</sup> It nevertheless illustrated a genuine concern that sport was no substitute for concerted military training. Paraphrasing the language of Bismarck in *Under the Red Ensign* (1912), Spencer Campbell aptly captures this preparatory sentiment, “Sport and amusements do not cement an empire, but blood and iron.”<sup>134</sup> Once again Germany offered a natural contrast in this debate, especially through its developing status as fictional invader-in-chief. Literary visions of German invasion regularly emphasise the futility of sporting prowess in the face of genuine military ability. B. S. Townroe couched the German threat in exactly these terms in his 1909 invasion-scare play, warning that “A nation in arms is coming, and a nation at play is to meet them.”<sup>135</sup> Praising *A Nation in Arms* at a branch meeting of the NSL in Southport, one speaker hoped that the play “would help arouse the country to a sense of danger”. Though unusually accepting that German invasion was, in strategic terms, unlikely, he warned the

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<sup>133</sup> *The Death Trap*, in Clarke, ed, *British Future Fiction, Vol. 7: Disasters to Come*, p. 37.

<sup>134</sup> S. Campbell, *Under the Red Ensign. A Story of England's Peril* (London: Andrew Melrose, 1912), p. 489. The fear of prioritising sport over military preparation was famously satirised by P. G. Wodehouse in *The Swoop! or, How Clarence Saved England* (1909) (Rockville: Arc Manor, 2008). In the newspaper that first reports the invasion of Britain, the headlines on the advertising poster read as such, “Surrey Doing Badly – German Army Lands in England”, p. 13.

<sup>135</sup> B. S. Townroe, *A Nation in Arms* (London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co., 1909), p. 46. Townroe’s play was produced under the auspices of the NSL. Named for the league’s journal, the play’s title equally referenced the famous strategic study *Das Volk in Waffen* by Lieutenant-Colonel Von Der Goltz, translated into English as *The Nation in Arms*, (London: W. H. Allen and Co., 1887).



audience of another invasion, “of luxury, apathy, irreligion, and love of pleasure”.<sup>136</sup> The surreptitious influence of this ‘invasion’ of sports and leisure, therefore, could be as damaging as a German expeditionary force.

What often lay at the root of such criticism was the idea of wasted energy. Britain’s problem was in this sense not one of a degenerate population, but of the Edwardian culture of leisure. “The strength of the nation had been sapped by too much soft life” so Walter Wood asserts in *The Enemy in our Midst*, creating a situation whereby “the young bloods who most furiously applauded banal patriotic music-hall patriotism were the first to pale at the suggestion of enforced military service”. In such “unprofitable outlets” as the music-hall, cricket, and football, “the energy of a mighty people ran to seed and verged on ruin.”<sup>137</sup> Hardross Courage of *The Secret* can be considered a personification of this spurned energy dynamic. Courage is a fine physical specimen, who considers his “life-long devotion to athletics” to have “broadened my shoulders, and given me strength beyond the average.”<sup>138</sup> A man who had “never gone in for a career”, he happily confesses that he generally “did nothing except play cricket and polo, and hunt and shoot”.<sup>139</sup> It is only on meeting the American beauty Miss Van Hoyt, and suffering her derision over his leisurely lifestyle, that Courage begins to question his priorities. Realising it “incredible that I had ever found myself content”, he recants his old way of life in accepting ‘the secret’ from his dying associate (a Franco-American plot to topple the French government alongside a German plot to invade Britain) and takes his place in the shadowy world of international espionage. Yet even having made this transition, the sporting spirit is not abandoned entirely. Passing “from behind the fences of my somewhat narrow but well-contained life”, Courage recognises himself as “but a pawn in the great game.”<sup>140</sup> Even critiques of associational

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<sup>136</sup> ‘The Non-Athletic Young Man: National Service League Meeting at Southport’, *Manchester Guardian* (20<sup>th</sup> September 1909), p. 4.

<sup>137</sup> W. Wood, *The Enemy in our Midst, The Story of a Raid on England* (London: John Long, 1906), p. 48.

<sup>138</sup> *The Secret*, p. 12.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 31 and 28.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.

obsession, then, struggled to remove themselves entirely from the Edwardian “gospel of fun”.<sup>141</sup>

Suffering particular criticism were spectator sports, a phenomenon that emerged out of a process of professionalisation that began in the late-Victorian period. While playing sport remained largely admired, thanks to its status as a pillar of public school education, the growing popularity of paying to watch professional athletes seemed to many a worrying trend. Critics regularly expressed such concerns by utilising the familiar simile of Roman decline. The disillusioned co-founder of West Ham United Arnold Hills, who later severed his ties with the club in protest against professionalism, compared Britain to Rome in 1898 through her citizens’ preference for being “artists and sportsmen by proxy”, hiring “a team of gladiators” to play on their behalf.<sup>142</sup> In an article entitled ‘Is Football Anti-Social?’, the *Labour Leader* similarly depicted football as a “gladiatorial show with the death scenes left out”.<sup>143</sup> Even neutral commentators felt compelled to comment on what was thought to be a unique national relationship with sports and leisure. In his comparative study *Industrial Efficiency*, the social investigator and journalist Arthur Shadwell addressed this issue directly. Though arguing that the British love of sports did not undermine industrial output or growth, he stressed that such activities

are taken more seriously in England than anywhere else; they absorb a much larger proportion of the attention, interest, energy and thought of the population in all classes...the elevation of games to a regular and serious pre-occupation...is distinctive of this nation...<sup>144</sup>

To its critics, however, the rise of ‘spectatorism’ was the clearest and most tangible example of the nation’s degeneracy. With none of the physical benefits of direct participation, sport

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<sup>141</sup> Rose, *The Edwardian Temperament*, p. 196.

<sup>142</sup> Quoted in C. Korr, ‘West Ham United and the Beginning of Professional Football in East London, 1895-1914’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 13.2 (1978), p. 220.

<sup>143</sup> Quoted in Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, p. 237.

<sup>144</sup> A. Shadwell, *Industrial Efficiency: a Comparative Study of Industrial Life in England, Germany and America* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1913), p. 500.

became a spectacle, rendering the largely working class attendees “mentally incapable of understanding their own needs and rights”.<sup>145</sup>

The majority of Edwardian invasion narratives present spectator sport and military service as two halves of a zero-sum game. Guy du Maurier’s highly successful play *An Englishman’s Home* (1909) directs much of its focus at this relationship. The eponymous householder Mr Brown spends much of the first act practising the diablo, while his daughter’s suitor Geoffrey reads at length from the sports supplement of his newspaper. Developing the character into a figure of suburban idleness, du Maurier’s Geoffrey seems incapable of communicating outside of a sporting vocabulary. Appearing detached from the events unfolding around him, he infuriates the military disposition of the Territorial officer Paul with his flippant speculation “I expect we shall see some fun”.<sup>146</sup> In a previous scene with the enemy Officer Captain Yoland, Geoffrey implores the enemy to quit the Brown household in his appeal that, as civilians, “we’re spectators. Leave us alone to look on.”<sup>147</sup> Speaking to the *Daily Mail* after the opening performance of *An Englishman’s Home*, the chairman of the County of London Territorial Association Viscount Esher thought the play highlighted “the results of men, otherwise perfectly qualified for the bearing of arms, devoting themselves exclusively to their own amusements”.<sup>148</sup> In *Starved into Surrender* the British are similarly criticised for going in their thousands “to watch a score of other men, specially fed and trained, play the game of football”, instead of “taking exercise to develop themselves”.<sup>149</sup> Returning to *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, the narrator describes how the British mass populace were too devoted to “the weekly feats of their professional athletes, to sally forth and encounter the forces of nature.”<sup>150</sup> Had the British

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<sup>145</sup> Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, p. 237.

<sup>146</sup> G. du Maurier, *An Englishman’s Home* (Milton Keynes: Kessinger Publishing, 2010), p. 70.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>148</sup> ‘An Englishman’s Home’, *Daily Mail* (29<sup>th</sup> January 1909), p. 7.

<sup>149</sup> *Starved into Surrender*, p. 11.

<sup>150</sup> *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, p. 7.

experienced “Four months under canvas...and a sound education in the most bracing of all schools, the school of war”, then the nation’s decline may have been prevented.<sup>151</sup>

The anxieties associated with the Edwardian campaign for compulsory military service in such narratives, then, are clearly not straightforwardly Tory. Many of the themes and tropes identified above, such as contempt for representative democracy; unguarded support of tariff reform; the threat of physical degeneration; and opposition to the national ‘obsession’ with sport and leisure, are not strictly reactionary or conservative in nature. Instead, these alarmist ideas are arguably characteristic of the Edwardian ‘Radical Right’. What the next section of this chapter aims to emphasise is the way in which compulsory military service is regularly represented in invasion literature as offering an antidote to such problems. Acting as a social, military, and political panacea, conscription is often treated as a long-overdue solution to Britain’s terminal decline. Yet these visions are complex and sometimes contradictory, as they struggle to separate the maligned status of British volunteerism from the mistrusted concept of German militarism.

### 3.5 - Visions of Military Reform

Perhaps the most detailed vision of military reform within Edwardian invasion literature is ‘The Army of a Dream’ by Rudyard Kipling.<sup>152</sup> The narrative describes, in the words of one reviewer, “a kind of military utopia, an ideal England, in which all the men and boys spend the best of their time in playing at war and all the women in admiring them.”<sup>153</sup> Kipling’s narrator is an officer of the ‘Tynesiders’, unfamiliar with the major Army reforms that have evidently occurred. What follows is an education in the intricacies of the new military order. This visionary system is based on a passion for soldiering that bears similarities to

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>152</sup> This short-story was initially serialised in the *Morning Post* in 1904, before later appearing in Kipling’s 1905 publication *Traffics and Discoveries*.

<sup>153</sup> ‘Two Utopias’, *The Speaker* (25<sup>th</sup> June 1904), p. 286.

the much-criticised Edwardian love for sport. Indeed, at times the two passions are seamlessly merged, such as through Kipling's portrayal of C. B. Fry. An iconic cricketer and athlete, Fry here appears as the brains behind placing "County Cricket and County volunteering...on the same footing":

...we have some town Volunteer corps that lay themselves out to attract promising youths of nineteen or twenty, and make much of 'em on condition that they join their line battalion and play for their county.<sup>154</sup>

Britain's new commitment to the soldiery life has not emerged from the ether, then, it has been consciously encouraged through legislation and reform. "If we don't volunteer till we're thirty-five", explains one member of the revered Imperial Guard, "we don't vote, and we don't get poor relief, and the women don't love us".<sup>155</sup> Additionally, school drilling has become near-uniform. For as another officer asserts, "the notion of allowing a human being to reach his twentieth year before asking him to put his feet in the first position was raving lunacy".<sup>156</sup> The tale finishes with the description of an impromptu and elaborate war game typical of this militarised society, the results of which appear in special edition newspapers. Ending rather abruptly, the narrator awakes in his club room from what was no more than a reverie, suggesting that such military perfection remained in the realms of fantasy.

'The Army of a Dream' is not vintage Kipling, and was treated accordingly by several contemporary reviewers. For the *Times Literary Supplement*, *Traffics and Discoveries* was "another disappointment from Mr Kipling", of which 'The Army of a Dream' was "a most repellent pamphlet".<sup>157</sup> In a comparison with William Morris's *News from Nowhere*, one critic writing in *The Speaker* asked, "in an age when wars are less frequent than they have been for 1,700 years, and in a country peculiarly protected by nature from attack", why should Britain sacrifice "all chance of doing or making anything worthy to be remembered to

<sup>154</sup> R. Kipling, 'The Army of a Dream', in *Traffics and Discoveries*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: MacMillan, 1930), p. 256.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p. 258.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., p. 246.

<sup>157</sup> 'Mr Kipling's New Book', *The Times Literary Supplement*, 143 (7<sup>th</sup> October 1904), p. 304.

the task of securing themselves against an unknown and unthreatened enemy.”<sup>158</sup> Kipling’s intricate and paradoxical vision of ‘compulsory volunteerism’ was clearly felt to represent a poorly disguised form of conscription.<sup>159</sup> Yet significantly, such suspicions are directly addressed in the text of ‘The Army of a Dream’. In attempting to convince the sceptical narrator, fellow Officers are quick to emphasise the voluntary nature of the new system:

My dear boy, there’s no compulsion. You’ve *got* to be drilled when you’re a child, same as you’ve got to learn to read; and if you don’t pretend to serve in some corps or other till you’re thirty-five or medically chucked, you rank with lunatics, women, and minors. That’s fair enough.<sup>160</sup>

Kipling’s narrative does not call for compulsory service so much as envisage the triumphant expansion of the voluntary principle. His vision of a reformed British military system, as the narrator’s companion steadfastly affirms, “ain’t a military despotism”.<sup>161</sup>

A tension clearly exists in ‘The Army of a Dream’ between change and traditionalism, in which a desire for military reform fails to overhaul the celebrated concept of volunteerism. And while Kipling’s vision of cultural militarisation addresses a series of domestic political problems, such as the preoccupation with sport and leisure, it struggles to reconcile these competing models of military preparation. The Edwardian debate concerning the relationship between the regular and irregular armed forces was highly acrimonious, often characterised by personal interest and polemical opinion. Britain’s patchwork system of voluntary military organisations inspired contrasting emotions. During parliamentary debates over the 1905 Army estimates, proposed reductions in the size of the volunteer forces were opposed by various speakers, who argued that such groups helped maintain the nation’s “fighting spirit”, and provided “valuable protection against recurrent panics”.<sup>162</sup> By contrast, the then War Secretary Hugh Arnold-Forster described the volunteers as “an utterly

<sup>158</sup> ‘Two Utopias’, *The Speaker* (25<sup>th</sup> June 1904), p. 286.

<sup>159</sup> Kipling refers to both “compulsory volunteers” and “compulsory conscripts”, ‘The Army of a Dream’, in *Traffics and Discoveries*, p. 264.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 263.

<sup>162</sup> *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)* (House of Commons), 4<sup>th</sup> ser., 144, col. 214 (3rd April 1905),

undisciplined mob”.<sup>163</sup> The reforms of his successor Richard Haldane, in which these auxiliary forces were streamlined by the establishment of the Territorial Force, are crucial to understanding the subsequent treatment of compulsory service within invasion literature. Initially creating cautious optimism among the pro-compulsion lobby, the Haldane reforms further enshrined the voluntary principle into Britain’s military system. In post-1907 invasion narratives, therefore, the Territorial Force (as it was originally named) is synonymous with British volunteerism, and often by extension, military ill-preparation.<sup>164</sup>

The Territorial soldiers of invasion literature are generally represented as the well-meaning face of a flawed military system. For staunch advocates of compulsory service, the Army appeared to have been “muddled away by the Haldane scheme”, while the bulk of Territorial volunteers were no more than “wastrels and townsmen out of employment”.<sup>165</sup> Though rarely questioned in terms of personal motivation or patriotic sentiment, many saw the force as fundamentally unfit for purpose. While the Territorials are praised in *The Invasion That Did Not Come Off* (1909) for creating “a good public impression” and “keeping the martial spirit alive”, the author Napier Hawke suggests that Haldane’s fledgling organisation could not be regarded “as the final bulwark of England.”<sup>166</sup> One factor that influenced such attitudes concerned the timeframe of home defence training. “Under Mr Haldane’s scheme”, complained Lord Roberts and several other senior NSL members in a letter to *The Times* in 1907, the Territorials’ mandatory six month period of training was to

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<sup>163</sup> Moon, ‘The Invasion of the United Kingdom’, p. 289.

<sup>164</sup> Rather than representing a direct merger of the Yeomanry, Militia, and Volunteers, the Haldane reforms addressed the various auxiliary organisations in quite specific ways. The Militia, for example, formed the basis of a Special Reserve force. For more details see T. Bowman, ‘The Auxiliary Forces’, in T. Bowman and M. Connelly, eds, *The Edwardian Army: Recruiting, Training, and Deploying the British Army, 1902-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 107-147. For the Haldane reforms in general see E. Spiers, ‘The Late Victorian Army 1868-1914’, in D. G. Chandler and I. Beckett, eds, *The Oxford History of the British Army* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p187-210, A. J. A. Morris, ‘Haldane’s Army Reforms 1906-08: The Deception of the Radicals’, *Journal of the Historical Association*, 56.186 (1971), pp. 17-34, J. Gooch, ‘Haldane and the National Army’, in I. Beckett and J. Gooch, eds, *Politicians and Defence: Studies in the Formulation of British Defence Policy, 1845-1970* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), pp. 69-86, and Allison, ‘The National Service Issue’, pp. 95- 111.

<sup>165</sup> *The Unknown Tomorrow*, p. 17, *The Death Trap*, in Clarke, ed, *British Future Fiction, Vol. 7: Disasters to Come*, p. 119.

<sup>166</sup> N. Hawke, *The Invasion That Did Not Come Off* (London: Henry J. Drane, 1909), p. 22.

begin “after the crisis is on us, not in anticipation of it.” “An Army which requires six months before it can act is not an army”, Roberts continued, “it is simply an armed crowd.”<sup>167</sup> Several invasion narratives similarly questioned the value of a voluntary-service force that was not permanently prepared to rapidly mobilise. Warning that Britain could not expect Germany “to wait six months until we had tried to lick the Territorials into shape”, in his work *When England Slept* (1909) Henry Curties criticises this six month training period as a “veneer of military accomplishment”. As his naval officer protagonist Reggie tellingly jokes, “It’s a good job the Navy don’t require to be put through a six months’ course of instruction before it can fire a shot”.<sup>168</sup>

Yet as with the contradictions of ‘The Army of a Dream’, negative representations of the Territorial Force were rarely accompanied by an outright rejection of military volunteerism. This was in part a by-product of authorial Germanophobia. Unwilling (or indeed politically unable) to wholeheartedly support the continental model of conscription, pro-compulsion campaigners walked a fine line between admiration of and opposition to German militarism. In Walter Wood’s *The Enemy in Our Midst* (1906), the colourful everyman John Steel consistently calls for wide-reaching reforms, affirming his belief that “the volunteers will have to go, and every able-bodied man will have to learn to be a soldier.” The narrator is nonetheless quick to criticise the invading army of German conscripts as “the product of a Universal military system which has brutalised them all.”<sup>169</sup> Even more explicit is the condemnation that follows the German defeat. Despite apparent superiority, the defeated enemy army is fundamentally flawed, “based on the insecure foundation of a people terrorised into universal military service.”<sup>170</sup> Patrick Vaux’s *When the Eagle Flies Seaward*, a stark warning of German naval ambitions remarkable for its vehement xenophobia, utilises similar ideas in a cautious defence of the voluntary principle. Vaux’s protagonist Lillinge, a merchant seaman and naval reservist, is regularly praised for his

<sup>167</sup> ‘Mr Haldane’s Scheme’, *The Times* (5<sup>th</sup> April 1907), p. 4.

<sup>168</sup> H. Curties, *When England Slept* (London: Everett and Co., 1909), pp. 126, 183 and 208.

<sup>169</sup> *The Enemy in our Midst*, p. 100.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 288.



bravery and natural sea-faring ability. Rather than a “reluctant conscript”, Lillinge is “a born seaman, the inheritor...of the seafaring instincts of innumerable generations”. Britain appears as the antithesis of Germany, whose armed forces are formed from “swashbuckler conscripts drawn from the ‘Junkern’ and the ‘Bavern’ and endless generations of inland burghers ramrod-backed through engrained militarism”.<sup>171</sup> With martial instinct pitted against ‘engrained militarism’, Vaux’s Britons fight through patriotic desire and with natural ability, unlike the efficient but ultimately superficial nature of German militarism. Despite the prominent status of the compulsory service campaign within Edwardian invasion literature, the treatment of military volunteerism was clearly anything but straightforward.

One intriguing example of this complex dynamic is Guy du Maurier’s invasion-scare play *An Englishman’s Home*. First performed in late-January 1909 at Wyndham’s Theatre in London, the production was set entirely inside ‘an Englishman’s home’, specifically that of the Brown family.<sup>172</sup> As is discussed above, the Browns are obsessed by sport and leisure, and wholly unmoved by contemporary calls for greater military preparation. The play sees the family’s domestic peace abruptly breached during the first act by the arrival of a party of invading soldiers. Horrified at this development, the homeowner Mr Brown appears comically incredulous at such a flagrant challenge to English privacy. While the men of the household are militarily untrained, the women are incapable of basic first aid. Both appear useless, even degenerate, next to the efficiency of the invading forces. The final scene sees Mr Brown arrested for bearing arms against the invaders as a civilian, not a regimented soldier. Led offstage for execution by firing squad, Hynes argues that this fiercely patriotic final stance was one “which du Maurier apparently expected his audience to admire and emulate.”<sup>173</sup> This interpretation, however, wrongly alleviates Brown from du Maurier’s critique of national attitudes towards military service. Such actions may be extremely brave,

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<sup>171</sup> P. Vaux, *When the Eagle Flies Seaward* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1907), pp. 17 and 86.

<sup>172</sup> The term ‘production’ is deliberately stressed here, for the play performed at Wyndham’s had changed significantly from du Maurier’s original script. See Hiley, ‘The Play, the Parody, the Censor and the Film’, *Intelligence & National Security*, p. 220.

<sup>173</sup> Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*, p. 47.

but they are foolhardy, and demonstrate the dangers of the British amateur spirit. Warning early in the play of the threat of militarism, “a condition of slavery which our country, up to now, has escaped”<sup>174</sup>, Brown’s abject uselessness as a civilian upon invasion is a far more damning enslavement than the form he initially fears. The Territorial Force, in turn, is hardly immune from negative portrayal. Mobilised to defend the Brown household, Captain Finch, the commanding officer of the local ‘English Volunteers’ regiment, is inexperienced and noticeably overwhelmed, while the face of the rank and file Paul is a figure of fun whose uniform is “two sizes too large for him.” Clearly intended to represent the Territorials, du Maurier’s English Volunteers are, as the stage notes confirm, “a mixed lot”.<sup>175</sup>

Despite such indifferent treatment, the extraordinary success of *An Englishman’s Home* served as a coup for Haldane’s fledgling reforms of the auxiliary forces. Lord Esher, then chairman of the County of London Territorial Association, saw the play three times in its first week, describing it as a “simply splendid” representation of foreign invasion.<sup>176</sup> Evidently sensing a good opportunity, a Territorial Force recruitment office was set up in the foyer of the theatre hoping to cater for a rush in volunteers. Reporting in February on the “fortunate increase” in numbers for the London Territorials, *The Times* gave much credit to du Maurier and Wyndham’s for staging the production “at the right psychological moment”.<sup>177</sup> Credit was also given to the *Daily Mail*, which had thrown its considerable weight behind *An Englishman’s Home* with the aim of inspiring a Territorial Force recruitment drive. This successful campaign culminated in a highly-publicised march in London on 13<sup>th</sup> February involving several thousand Territorial soldiers.<sup>178</sup> The compulsory service campaign, by contrast, was caught unaware by the success of *An Englishman’s Home*. Once it became clear that du Maurier’s play had been captured for volunteerism the NSL was left in an embarrassing and potentially damaging position. Initially restricting itself to “sardonic

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<sup>174</sup> *An Englishman’s Home*, p. 30.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>176</sup> ‘An Englishman’s Home’, *Daily Mail* (29<sup>th</sup> January 1909), p. 7, ‘Army Chiefs at the Play’, *Daily Mail* (3<sup>rd</sup> February 1909), p. 5.

<sup>177</sup> ‘The London Territorials’, *The Times* (15<sup>th</sup> February 1909), p. 6.

<sup>178</sup> ‘Scenes of Enthusiasm in London’, *Daily Mail* (15<sup>th</sup> February 1909), p. 5.

criticism” of Territorial opportunism, the league eventually produced its own invasion play, B. S. Townroe’s *A Nation in Arms*, in an effort to reclaim lost ground. Unfortunately for those involved, this targeted propaganda was too little too late, as *A Nation in Arms* was far less successful than its illustrious forebear. This remarkable affair illustrates, as Moon has argued, “the characteristic ambivalence of...invasion propaganda”.<sup>179</sup> Though critical of both military amateurism and the Territorial Force, du Maurier’s play is remembered for lionising the former and promoting the latter.<sup>180</sup>

Such ambivalence is equally apparent in William Le Queux’s infamous *The Invasion of 1910* (1906), a novel that has become synonymous with the British fear of invasion. Despite a successful, prolific, and high-profile literary career, Le Queux presents historians with a peculiarly difficult task. According to his obituary in *The Times*, Le Queux was a writer, journalist, British agent, and Consul-General of San Marino; had variously studied art, criminology, and “the secret service systems of Continental Powers”; was an avid collector of medieval manuscripts and monastic seals; and counted “monarchs and other celebrities” among his close associates.<sup>181</sup> Referring to him with the familiar *sobriquet* “Master of Mystery”, the Conservative MP Sir Robert Gower considered Le Queux’s “countless exploits” of espionage and intrigue even more daring than “the most colourful adventures of his bravest fictional heroes”.<sup>182</sup> These vivid details, however, are difficult to take at face value. As David Stafford explains, Le Queux quite deliberately surrounded himself in “a web of mystery and fantasy”, making it difficult to distinguish the reality of his life from the unreality

<sup>179</sup> Moon, ‘The Invasion of the United Kingdom’, p. 405.

<sup>180</sup> A third invasion-scare play of this period, *Fall in Rookies!* (London: Chiswick Press, 1910) by the successful playwright H. A. Jones, similarly stresses the social value of military training. The protagonist Nat is transformed by joining the Army, from an unemployed drunk into a “sharp, bright and alert...soldier-like” individual. Musing on his personal experiences, Nat argues that “it’ll be a jolly good day for England when every young man is took in hand as I was and drilled and forced to do what he’s told!”, pp. 25-28. Originally titled ‘Drill the Rascals!’, the play’s title was changed one week prior to its opening night at the Alhambra Theatre. See ‘Men and Matters’, *Dundee Courier* (17<sup>th</sup> October 1910), p. 8.

<sup>181</sup> ‘Mr William Le Queux’, *The Times* (14<sup>th</sup> October 1927), p. 11.

<sup>182</sup> Sir R. Gower, Introduction to N. Sladen, *The Real Le Queux* (London: Nicholson and Watson, 1938), xv.

of his literary output.<sup>183</sup> Even the French origins of his unusual name, as a recent biography explores, are difficult to firmly ascertain.<sup>184</sup> Le Queux's status as a member of "the uppermost reaches of pre-war European society", then, was the product of self-identification, and cannot be said to have corresponded to any firm reality.<sup>185</sup> His enormous body of work was arguably united by two perceived threats to this pseudo-aristocratic identity, the prospect of foreign invasion on the one hand, and the fear of socio-political upheaval on the other.

*The Invasion of 1910* is in many respects the quintessential Edwardian invasion narrative. Working alongside Lord Roberts and the media mogul Alfred Harmsworth, Le Queux's work benefitted from detailed preparation and an extraordinary publicity drive. In the interests of accuracy and realism, the author claimed to have reconnoitred "the whole of England from the Thames to the Tyne" in his "40-h.p. Napier" before putting pen to paper.<sup>186</sup> First serialised in the *Daily Mail* in March 1906, the opening instalment was promoted by the printing of detailed invasion maps in various newspapers (see *Figure 3.2*). In addition, *Daily Mail* sandwich-men are said to have marched down Oxford Street dressed in "Prussian-blue uniforms", as if to suggest Le Queux's siege of London was already in progress.<sup>187</sup> This first instalment was even commented upon in Parliament. Asked whether steps could be taken

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<sup>183</sup> D. A. T. Stafford, 'Conspiracy and Xenophobia: The Popular Spy Novels of William Le Queux, 1893-1914', *Europa*, 4.2 (1981), p. 168. The best illustration of this dynamic is Le Queux's autobiography, *Things I Know about Kings, Celebrities and Crooks* (London: Eveleigh Nash and Grayson, 1923).

<sup>184</sup> Patrick and Baister, *William Le Queux, Master of Mystery*, pp. 3-5.

<sup>185</sup> Stafford, 'Conspiracy and Xenophobia', *Europa*, pp. 168-169.

<sup>186</sup> 'Can England Be Invaded?', *Daily Mail* (10<sup>th</sup> March 1906), p. 4.

<sup>187</sup> E. Wingfield-Stratford, *Before the Lamps Went Out*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1979), pp. 209-210.

WITH A FULL ACCOUNT OF THE SIEGE OF LONDON.

Speaking in the House of Lords on the 10th July, 1905, I said: "It is to the people of the country I appeal to take up the question of the Army in a sensible, practical manner. For the sake of all they hold dear, let them bring home to themselves what would be the condition of Great Britain if it were to lose its wealth, its power, its position."

The catastrophe that may happen if we still remain in our present state of unpreparedness is vividly and forcibly illustrated in Mr. Le Queux's new book, which I recommend to the perusal of everyone who has the welfare of the British Empire at heart.—ROBERTS, F.M.



***It will  
be  
Valuable.***

**Keep  
this  
Map  
for  
Reference.**

***It will  
be  
Valuable.***

This Intensely Interesting Narrative by Mr. Wm. Le Queux begins in the  
**LONDON "DAILY MAIL" TO-MORROW.**

**ORDER THE "DAILY MAIL" TO-DAY.**

**ORDER THE "DAILY MAIL" TO-DAY.**

*Figure 3.2* – ‘The Invasion of 1910’, *The Times* (13<sup>th</sup> March 1906), p. 11. This image is not, strictly speaking, an invasion literature illustration. It formed one part of the major publicity drive that preceded the serialisation of *The Invasion of 1910* in the *Daily Mail*. Taking up a full page in *The Times* (no doubt at great expense), the advertisement highlights the level of financial backing Alfred Harmsworth was willing to provide William Le Queux (Harmsworth did not purchase *The Times* until 1908). Unfortunately, there is no record of who was involved in the production of this map. The map is typical of Le Queux’s style, in that it utilises familiar locations to capture the imagination of its audience. This includes marking the location of the German landings, and highlighting the frontline of the “Defence of London” and other scenes of “considerable fighting”. Carrying a message from Lord Roberts at its top, in which he recommends the book “to everyone who has the welfare of the British Empire at heart”, the advertisement deliberately makes little effort to indicate its fictional nature. This is illustrated in particular by the advice printed in the margins, “Keep this map for reference. It will be valuable”.

to discourage the publication of material “calculated to prejudice our relations with other powers”, the Prime Minister Henry Campbell-Bannerman advised that Le Queux’s work could be safely left “to be judged by the good sense and good taste of the British people.”<sup>188</sup> When later published as a book, *The Invasion of 1910* sold over a million copies and was translated into twenty-seven languages, including a controversial edition in German.<sup>189</sup>

The great popularity of *The Invasion of 1910* stemmed, in Matin’s view, from typicality rather than uniqueness, as the novel “both evinces and epitomises nearly all of the salient motifs of invasion literature”.<sup>190</sup> Beginning with an ill-explained naval disaster, the narrative imagines German troops landing at several points in East Anglia, exposing Britain’s flawed defensive capabilities. Sweeping across south-east England, the rapidly advancing German troops lay siege to London as Parliament evacuates west to Bristol, under heavy criticism for the rank incompetence displayed in military preparation. Though the invaders are eventually routed, Britain is left battered and bruised, lamenting her lack of foresight and her government’s overconfident irresponsibility. Labelled “the pamphlet of the hour” by the *Observer*, the work is certainly a candidate, as is suggested by Clarke, for the status of “most sensational of all the pre-1914 imaginary wars”.<sup>191</sup>

Le Queux explicitly states the purpose of his narrative during its preface. The work was written, so the reader is told, “to illustrate our utter unpreparedness for war from a military standpoint; [and] to show how, under certain conditions which may easily occur, England can be successfully invaded by Germany”.<sup>192</sup> The narrative is equally shaped, however, by implicit concerns over Britain’s domestic political situation. Le Queux blames the invasion on British perfidy rather than German ambition, with particular ire directed at the

<sup>188</sup> *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)* (House of Commons), 4<sup>th</sup> ser., 153, cols. 1120 (13<sup>th</sup> March 1906).

<sup>189</sup> I. F. Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War: Future Wars 1763-3749* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 122.

<sup>190</sup> Matin, ‘Securing Britain’, p. 63.

<sup>191</sup> ‘The Invasion of England’, *Observer* (5<sup>th</sup> August 1906), p. 6, and Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War*, p. 122.

<sup>192</sup> *Invasion of 1910*, vi.

“antimilitant’ cabinets” of the “pro-German” Liberals.<sup>193</sup> Yet few sections of society escape authorial criticism. Ignorant rural villagers are described as “completely dumbfounded” by advancing German soldiers; passing reference is made to the “smug respectability” of middle class suburbs; while the food riots of “lawless men and women from the slums of Whitechapel” transform London into “a state of absolute stagnation and chaos”.<sup>194</sup> Ending with an extended assessment of post-invasion Britain, this summary is really an ill-disguised critique of contemporary Edwardian society. Condemning high taxes for forcing wealthy citizens into emigration, Le Queux identifies “Socialists” as “the true authors of England’s misfortunes” in their campaign against increases in armament spending. In a critique of long-term political reform, Le Queux laments that Britain’s “strong aristocratic Government” had been replaced “by a weak administration, swayed by every breath of popular impulse”. Britain’s military and naval weaknesses, as such, are illustrative of far deeper socio-political problems. The disastrous experience of invasion, as Le Queux concludes, “reflected the moral tone of the nation, which took no interest in naval or military affairs, and was then enraged to find out that, in the hour of trial, everything for a time went wrong”.<sup>195</sup>

The narrative is equally marked in its criticism of Britain’s regular and irregular armed forces. In a chapter styled as extracts from the diary of a German officer, enemy soldiers provide scathing judgement of Britain’s “miserable volunteers” by mocking an Army recruitment poster. Sarcastically described as setting forth “the joys and emoluments which awaited the difficult-to-find Englishman patriotic enough to become a soldier”, the officer derisorily questions British faith that “such a system of raising an army could ever produce an efficient machine”.<sup>196</sup> Those that had answered this call are later lamented as victims

...of a selfish nation that accepted these poor fellows gratuitous services merely in order that its citizens should not be obliged to carry out what in every other European country was regarded as the first duty of citizenship – that of learning to bear arms in the defence of the

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid., p. 219.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., pp. 219, 17, and 145.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., pp. 542-549.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., pp. 121 and 145.

Fatherland.<sup>197</sup>

The overriding sentiment, then, is of the futility of military preparation based on volunteerism. For unless compelled into doing so, Le Queux could not see the Edwardian public engaging with such schemes in high enough numbers. Furthermore, nothing other than a comprehensive system of compulsory military service could provide effective military training, as volunteerism would never successfully rise above its inherent amateurism. As one character angrily exhorts on hearing of the successful German landings, “They [the Government] should have listened to Lord Roberts”.<sup>198</sup>

It is, however, roughshod amateurism that saves the day. During a parliamentary session of recrimination at Bristol, the hastily arranged Commons debate sees Britain’s “foolish insular superiority” condemned. For what hope is there, one member asks, “when patriotism is ranged against modern military science.”<sup>199</sup> Reacting against such hopeless pessimism, the young and pragmatic MP Gerald Graham emerges. He appeals to his fellow members to sanction the creation of a popular militia, asserting, “If we organise and unite, we shall drive the Kaiser’s hordes into the sea.”<sup>200</sup> Masterminding the formation of the ‘League of Defenders’, Graham is subsequently heralded “the saviour of our beloved country.”<sup>201</sup> The ensuing German defeat was criticised in *The Saturday Review* as “a denouement which strikes us as merely a melodramatic pandering to popular prejudice.”<sup>202</sup> These closing chapters certainly seem to undermine the narrative’s earlier criticism of military amateurism. Recognising their lack of strategic discipline, the League limit themselves to guerrilla-style tactics. In the “desperate street-fighting” that ensues, the rebels become “much more formidable than they were ever likely to be in the open field”.<sup>203</sup> Gracious in his eventual defeat, the German General Von Kleppen recognises his loss of the initiative with the following observation, “The British are dull and apathetic, but once aroused,

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid., p. 303.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., p. 403 and 406.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., p. 408.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., p. 459.

<sup>202</sup> ‘The Invasion of 1910’, *Saturday Review*, 102.2649 (4<sup>th</sup> August 1906), p. 148.

<sup>203</sup> *Invasion of 1910*, p. 520.



they fight like fiends.”<sup>204</sup> Despite evident commitment to the introduction of compulsory military service, then, the unconvincing conclusion of *The Invasion of 1910* suggests reluctance on Le Queux’s part to entirely abandon the celebrated qualities of volunteerism.

Both *The Invasion of 1910* and ‘The Army of a Dream’ are heavily shaped by contradictory representations of compulsion and volunteerism. One narrative that effectively avoided this trap was *The Writing on the Wall* (1906). Published in the same year as *The Invasion of 1910*, and written under the pseudonym of ‘General Staff’, the work marketed itself as a “sandwich of facts and fiction”.<sup>205</sup> As with many examples of Edwardian invasion literature, *The Writing on the Wall* combines, in Joseph Meisel’s words, “virulent Germanophobia...with the kind of admiration that comes from watchful fear of a successful competitor”.<sup>206</sup> Purportedly describing a German invasion of 1908 from the analytical vantage point of 1915, the narrative imagines an outrageous German attack on a joint Anglo-German naval review. Met by “a howl of indignation...from the whole civilised world”, the Germans nonetheless proceed to embark men at several points on Britain’s eastern and south-eastern coasts.<sup>207</sup> Making short work of the British defences, the Germans dictate their terms within striking distance of London, and bombard the East End when these demands are refused. When the invaders’ terms are eventually met, they return to Germany with “the persons of 500 leading Englishmen”, to be held as hostages until huge war indemnities are paid. With Britain defeated, Germany annexes Holland and Denmark, invades France, and manufactures the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This German domination of the continent is crowned by the construction of a canal from the Baltic to the Adriatic, allowing for the transportation of warships from Kiel through to the Mediterranean, in a symbolic usurpation of Britain’s naval dominance.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid., p. 529.

<sup>205</sup> ‘General Staff’, pseud., *The Writing on the Wall*, (London: William Heinemann, 1906), viii.

<sup>206</sup> J. S. Meisel, ‘The Germans are Coming! British Fiction of a German Invasion 1871-1913’, *War, Literature, and the Arts*, 2.2 (1990), p. 56.

<sup>207</sup> *The Writing on the Wall*, p. 46.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., pp. 172 and 181.

It is abundantly clear from the beginning of the narrative where 'General Staff' lays the blame for Britain's ignominious defeat. The country had grown "luxurious and vulgar" through love of sport and lack of religion. Unlike the Germans the British are not soldiers, they are drinkers and gamblers, known for their poor health and weak constitutions. The product of "long peace and over-civilisation", Britain's defective populace appear to display all "the hall-marks of a decadent and enfeebled people".<sup>209</sup> Such vulgarity was "greatly responsible" for the national "aversion to any kind of military service". To rely on volunteerism and natural martial ability is deemed fallacious and irresponsible, for "the time has gone by when wars can be won by pluck and spirit".<sup>210</sup> The British defeat is thus the product not only of poor military planning, it is rooted in social and political ill-preparation. In defeat, however, there is opportunity. Taking the invasion catastrophe as a hard-learned lesson, Britain introduces a system of compulsory military service, comprehensively outlined in the final chapter of *The Writing on the Wall*. In an extension of the pre-Haldane reforms Militia Ballot, 'General Staff' envisages a trained auxiliary force of nearly a million men.<sup>211</sup> In addition, "drill and musketry" are introduced to the school curriculum, helping to instil a national "culture of patriotism". Praising the impact of compulsory service on the nation, the narrator reports that "the manhood which has had the advantage of a year's drill and discipline can at a glance be recognised...physically they are finer men, and employers seek them out on account of their orderly habits."<sup>212</sup> Ending in a flurry of opaque metaphor, this near-future military reorganisation acts as a warning for the Edwardian present:

It is easy to be wise and shut the stable door after the steed is stolen. That is, unfortunately, our position, and all we can do is to lock the door in such a manner as to assure ourselves that when the foal we have in the stable is grown up he shall not be stolen, as was his predecessor.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid., pp. 145 and 39.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., pp. 14 and 21.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., pp. 186-187.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., pp. 199 and 227.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., p. 227.

Though providing a detailed and uncompromising vision of military reform, the sensationalism of *The Writing on the Wall* generated little popular interest. It was a pity, thought the *Aberdeen Journal*, that ‘General Staff’ had “overshot the mark”, for there was “no want of evidence without having to recourse to exaggeration, that our army system is, in many respects, obsolete”.<sup>214</sup> Arguably the most effective narrative in this regard was H. H. Munro’s dystopian short-story *When William Came*. Born in Burma but brought up in rural Devon by his two paternal aunts, Munro became a journalist and foreign correspondent following a short period in the colonial service that was curtailed by ill-health. Under the pseudonym of Saki, Munro enjoyed contemporary acclaim as a writer for “his satire and shrewd psychological predictions”.<sup>215</sup> This forthright literary style masked a complex, conflicted, and sexually repressed individual, who fostered in his writings a bitter and pessimistic view of modernity. Despite drawing influence from writers such as Oscar Wilde and Lewis Carroll, and in turn influencing a later generation of comedic authors including P. G. Wodehouse, Munro’s writings have since been criticised for their “militaristic, arrogant and xenophobic” values. Grouped by Christopher Lane among a corpus of ‘proto-fascist’ British authors, Munro is arguably illustrative of the broader political extremism in Edwardian invasion literature.<sup>216</sup>

Such criticism notwithstanding, *When William Came* has a literary merit that sets it apart from much of the genre. Clarke praises the work as the “best of all the ‘German invasion’ stories”, asserting that it embodies “a peculiarly English interest in the transformation by some catastrophic change of the familiar – landscape, society, the entire known order”.<sup>217</sup> The plot is centred on Murrey Yeovil, a typical Edwardian traveller and

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<sup>214</sup> ‘A German Invasion of England’, *Aberdeen Journal* (16<sup>th</sup> July 1906), p. 3.

<sup>215</sup> Bridgham, ed, *The First World War as a Clash of Cultures*, p. 6.

<sup>216</sup> Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*, p. 51, C. Lane, *The Ruling Passion: British Colonial Allegory and the Paradox of Homosexual Desire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), p. 223.

<sup>217</sup> I. F. Clarke, *The Great War with Germany, 1890-1914, Fictions and Fantasies of the War-to-come* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1997), p. 368.

sportsman, returning from Siberia to Britain after a lengthy period of illness. His convalescence is not helped by ominous reports of war, and ultimately, of spectacular British defeat. By the time Yeovil arrives home, he emerges from Victoria Station into a post-war, German-occupied London. His detached disbelief quickly turns to disgust on gauging the submissive behaviour of his social circle; as his wife muses to a friend prior to his arrival, “he’ll think we are a set of callous revellers, fiddling while Rome is burning.”<sup>218</sup> Those who could not suffer a Germanised capital had followed the King in his flight to Delhi, or else had retreated to country estates. As Yeovil attempts to adjust to his new circumstances, the narrative follows a series of events confirming the new order of things, including being fined by a bilingual policeman for walking on the grass at Hyde Park, and inadvertently accepting a lift from the establishment figure Herr von Kwarl. Struggling to accept what has begun to be referred to as the “*fait accompli*”, Yeovil oscillates between anger and bemusement, horrified by his personal and national circumstances yet incapable of mounting effective resistance.<sup>219</sup>

As might be expected in a dystopian vision of occupation, the story has moments of exquisitely executed irony. One such example is “the long awaited *Aufklärung*” concerning the controversial issue of military service in the newly-expanded German Empire.<sup>220</sup> As he impatiently sits in a cafe awaiting the official announcement, Yeovil ruminates with a fellow patron on the tragedy of the enactment, “about to enforce military service on these people...when they’ve no longer a country to fight for”.<sup>221</sup> Hearing the cry of “Military service, spesh-ull!”, Yeovil’s companion purchases a paper, and the stark reality of Britain’s military future unfolds before them. Having demonstrated themselves prior to occupation “unsuited as a race to bear arms and to conform to military discipline”, Britons were to be exempted from military service, and subjected instead to a differentially high “war taxation”. With

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<sup>218</sup> G. T. Chesney and ‘Saki’ (H. H. Munro), *The Battle of Dorking and When William Came: A Story of London under the Hohenzollerns* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 56.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., p. 122. The term *Aufklärung* translates as ‘clarification’, or in a philosophical context as ‘enlightenment’. Thanks to Imke Wulff for her advice on this matter.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., p. 126.

military service closed henceforth as an occupation, any organisations of a military nature were to be disbanded, as Britain becomes effectively demilitarised. As Yeovil numbly recognises, “the cold irony of the measure struck home with the greater force because its nature was so utterly unexpected”:

Public anticipation had guessed at various forms of military service, aggressively irksome or tactfully lightened as the case may be...and now there had come this contemptuous boon, which had removed, at one stroke, the bogey of compulsory military service from the troubled imaginings of the British people, and fastened on them the cruel distinction of being in actual fact what an enemy had called them in splenetic scorn long years ago – a nation of shopkeepers.<sup>222</sup>

*When William Came* arguably takes the social aspects of the conscription debate to their logical extremity. Rather than representing a military necessity, compulsory military service appears as a method of cultural salvation, a redemptive step that might help avoid the national disaster envisaged by Munro. It was an approach that was received warmly by much of the pro-service lobby. Having personally sent Lord Roberts a copy of the narrative, the aging campaigner replied to Munro enthusiastically, voicing his thorough approval of “the moral it teaches.”<sup>223</sup> One review in *The Saturday Review* speculated on what exactly the moral entailed, asserting that Munro’s work questioned “the effective force of patriotism...How far will it sway a man when it comes to the test?”<sup>224</sup> A glowing review in *The Academy* was far less circumspect:

...for the most part, the book is a terrible indictment of present-day political dishonesty and dishonour...It is a book that should be hammered, sentence by sentence, into such brains as peace-at-any-price Little Englanders possess, for at points, in emphatic fashion, the danger that attends on the starvation of military forces to-day, the sacrifice of efficiency to the god

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<sup>222</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>223</sup> Kemp, Mitchell, and Trotter, *Edwardian Fiction*, p. 351.

<sup>224</sup> ‘When William Came’, *Saturday Review*, 117.3036 (3<sup>rd</sup> January 1914), p. 21.

economy, and the folly that makes no provision for the military training of the nation's young manhood.<sup>225</sup>

Likening Munro's stinging satire to "the cut of a whip", the *Aberdeen Journal* reported how the book "has set thousands of people a-talking", and voiced the hope that it might "set them a-thinking as well".<sup>226</sup> Bitter, despairing, and accusatory in tone, *When William Came* is undeniably effective in communicating its message. In bypassing invasion to analyse the consequences of British military defeat, Munro offered the most damning of all Edwardian invasion narratives.

As with *The Writing on the Wall*, however, there is a glimmer of home in this pessimistic vision. The work's final scene sees the great and the good of London's Anglo-German social elite gathered at Hyde Park to observe a symbolic Boy Scouts march, with Kaiser Wilhelm as the guest of honour. Representing the climax in German efforts to entice Britain's youth into a united, broad, and cosmopolitan Imperial Germany, the notable collaborator Lady Baliquist describes the Scouts as

the Janissaries of the Empire; the younger generation knocking at the doors of progress, and thrusting back the bars and bolts of old racial prejudices. I tell you...it will be a historic moment when the first corps of those little khaki-clad boys swings through the gates of the Park."<sup>227</sup>

Hoping for a moment of significant reconciliation between victor and vanquished, the narrative ends with the young Scouts having failed to appear, leaving the waiting Germans on increasingly frustrated tenterhooks. As Yeovil recognises, while he himself had reluctantly laid down his arms, "there were others who had never hoisted the flag of surrender...young hearts that had not forgotten, had not compounded, would not yield. The younger generation had barred the door."<sup>228</sup> What Munro's Scouts provide in their display of generational bravery is a form of "redemptive militarism". As Petra Rau explains, the civilian

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<sup>225</sup> 'When William Came', *The Academy*, 2171 (13<sup>th</sup> December 1913), p. 752.

<sup>226</sup> 'When William Came', *Aberdeen Journal* (13<sup>th</sup> December 1913), p. 6.

<sup>227</sup> Chesney and 'Saki', *The Battle of Dorking* and *When William Came*, p. 177.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182.

future of *When William Came* is “an abyss of boredom, degeneration and domesticity”. Dynamic and restless, priding the colonial frontier and the rugged outdoors over degenerative urban modernity, and untarnished by the shame of defeat through virtue of their youth, the organisation was a natural ray of hope.<sup>229</sup> It is hard not to agree with Hynes that the iconic Chief Scout Baden Powell “must have loved that brave conclusion.”<sup>230</sup>

Baden Powell’s Scouts, it should be noted, are not always treated so kindly in the pages of Edwardian invasion literature. As an organisation that, in Michael Paris’s words, “reflected Edwardian anxiety about physical decline, loss of racial energy and the mounting challenge from European rivals”, it formed a natural target for the minority of authors who opposed compulsory military service, or indeed, questioned the threat of invasion altogether.<sup>231</sup> The Scouts notably bore the brunt of *The Swoop! or, How Clarence Saved England* (1909), P. G. Wodehouse’s famous send-up of the invasion genre.<sup>232</sup> *The Swoop* sees Britain simultaneously invaded by nine separate aggressors, including Germany, Russia, the Swiss Navy and “a boisterous band of Young Turks”. This situation is “rendered still more disquieting” by the fact that “England’s military strength at this time was practically nil”. With the Army undermined by egalitarian socialist reforms (whereby every man in the Army has been promoted to the rank of General), and the Territorials finding “the strain of being referred to on the music-hall stage as Teddy-boys was too much for them”, Britain is

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<sup>229</sup> Rau, *English Modernism, National Identity and the Germans*, p. 83.

<sup>230</sup> Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*, p. 52.

<sup>231</sup> M. Paris, *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850-2000* (London: Reaktion, 2000), p. 108. See also J. Springhall, ‘Baden-Powell and the Scout Movement before 1920: Citizen Training of Soldiers of the Future?’, *English Historical Review*, 102.405 (1987), pp. 934-942. Other historians have argued that the Scouts were not strictly ‘militaristic’ in nature. See S. Pryke, ‘The Popularity of Nationalism in the Early British Boy Scout Movement’, *Social History*, 23.3 (1998), pp. 309-324.

<sup>232</sup> Though satirising the invasion genre in its entirety, *The Swoop* can be directly linked with several specific invasion narratives. Its title, as Hynes points out, suggests a nod to James Blyth’s *The Swoop of the Vulture* (London: Digby Long and Co., 1909), published in the same year, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*, p. 48. In terms of plot and satirical thrust, however, *The Swoop* was really responding to the success of *An Englishman’s Home* earlier in 1909. The opening chapter of the work, titled ‘An English Boy’s Home’, closely follows the first Act of du Maurier’s play. Richard Scully, in turn, suggests that Wodehouse also consciously reflected elements of Le Queux’s *The Invasion of 1910, British Images of Germany*, pp. 118-119.

left defenceless, save for the indomitable Boy Scouts.<sup>233</sup> Luckily, Wodehouse's protagonist Clarence, the beleaguered face of Baden Powell's movement, is a model Scout:

He could do everything that the Boy Scout must learn to do. He could low like a bull. He could gurgle like a wood pigeon. He could imitate the cry of the turnip in order to deceive rabbits. He could smile and whistle simultaneously in accordance with Rule 8 (and only those who have tried know how difficult it is).<sup>234</sup>

Such backhanded compliments are a far cry from Saki's patriotic portrayal of the Scouting movement in *When William Came*.

Despite being considered in detail by most analyses of British invasion literature, *The Swoop* was not a major success, selling few copies and remaining out of print until 1979.<sup>235</sup> Clarke has suggested that this indifferent reception was not surprising. "After such a heavy diet of war stories and appeals to join the Territorials", the Edwardian reading public "was not likely to be amused by such frivolity".<sup>236</sup> Yet the satire was welcomed in some quarters. The *Dundee Courier* praised the narrative as "a clever and amusing skit on the invasion stories which are the vogue just now."<sup>237</sup> In similarly positive language, the *Aberdeen Journal* describes *The Swoop* as "a combination of burlesques":

..."An Englishman's Home," the apprehensions of a German invasion, the zeal of the Boy Scouts, the English absorption in games, the music-hall craze, the heroics of the "Daily Mail," ...all being satirised in turn.<sup>238</sup>

While such satire may have been welcome (at least, it seems, in Scotland), it was arguably too late. In an article in *The Times* barely a month after the publication of *The Swoop*, the journalist and conscription stalwart Charles Repington proposed that the Government should offer annual subsidies to "all semi-military institutions and organisations". By incorporating

<sup>233</sup> P. G. Wodehouse, *The Swoop! or, How Clarence Saved England* (Rockville: Arc Manor, 2008), pp. 18-19.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11. Here Wodehouse makes derisory reference to Rule 8 of the Scout's Law, "A Scout smiles and whistles under all difficulties". See R. Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: a Handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. (London: Pearson, 1920), p. 7.

<sup>235</sup> N. Longmate, *Island Fortress: The Defence of Great Britain 1603-1945* (London: Hutchinson, 1991), p. 420.

<sup>236</sup> Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War*, p. 127.

<sup>237</sup> 'An Amusing Skit', *Dundee Courier* (28<sup>th</sup> April 1909), p. 7.

<sup>238</sup> 'Miscellaneous', *Aberdeen Journal* (26<sup>th</sup> April 1909), p. 3.



the Territorials, rifle clubs, veterans' societies, the Legion of Frontiersmen, and the Boy Scouts into one organisational structure, Repington believed that "a National Army of the Second Line" could be established.<sup>239</sup> Wodehouse's satirical vision of the Boy Scouts as the nation's last line of defence, then, did not seem so absurd to the advocates of greater military preparation.

### 3.6 - Conclusion: A Multi-Faceted Campaign

What this chapter has aimed to emphasise is the important influence of the Edwardian compulsory military service debate on contemporary invasion literature. Though this campaign was primarily based on external questions of military preparation, it served as a banner under which a significant range of domestic socio-political issues were raised. As was highlighted by analysis of *The Message* by A. J. Dawson, these issues included electoral reform, declining religious observance, and most importantly, the pervasive fear of physical degeneracy. Alongside contempt for the obsessive pursuit of sport and leisure, concerns over the health of the British population heavily shaped many invasion narratives. The threat of invasion was not a straightforward matter of German aggression, but also a damning indictment of modern British society. For much of the authorship compulsory military service provided the natural answer to these grave national ills. Operating as a political panacea, conscription would not only secure Britain against invasion, it would improve the country in physical, social, and cultural terms. Yet these propagandistic visions of military reform were anything but consistent. Struggling to rationalise compulsion with British traditions of military volunteerism, Edwardian invasion literature produced a series of complex and often contradictory visions. Ranging from the amalgamated concept of 'compulsory volunteerism' from 'The Army of a Dream', the ambiguous League of Defenders in *The Invasion of 1910*, through to the wholesale conscription of *The Writing on the Wall* and the demilitarised *fait accompli* of *When William Came*, such contrasting interpretations

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<sup>239</sup> 'The Territorial Force', *The Times* (10<sup>th</sup> Mat 1909), p. 7.

are indicative of a high-profile campaign that struggled to maintain unity of thought and action.

Most importantly, compulsory service was a political issue associated largely (though not exclusively) with the Edwardian 'Radical Right'. As such, the regularity of conscription themes within invasion narratives questions the principle that the literature was primarily a Tory creation. These works were not strictly reactionary in nature. Rather than defending the status quo, invasion narratives proposed major socio-political upheaval, sponsoring the introduction of unprecedented change and reform. This dynamic will be illustrated further in the following chapter, during which the literature's representation of the domestic political issues referred to as the 'Edwardian Crisis' will be assessed. Far from toeing the party line or offering typically conservative political alternatives, such narratives are defined by radical opinion. In their portrayals of political controversies including Irish Home Rule, the female suffrage campaign, growing industrial unrest, and Liberal proposals for social reform, the authors of invasion literature continually promote the ideas and sentiments of the 'Radical Right'.

## **The Edwardian Crisis and Contemporary Invasion Narratives**

### **4.1 - Introduction**

The previous chapters have addressed the domestic political concerns of Edwardian invasion literature in an indirect sense, through analyses of national identity and the multi-faceted campaign for compulsory military service. The following chapter will engage directly with the concept of the 'Edwardian Crisis', assessing how the defining internal political upheavals of this period were represented in invasion narratives. This will begin with the landslide Liberal election victory in 1906. By exploring the way in which Edwardian invasion literature regularly equated Liberalism with political inexperience, incompetence, and extremism, the 1906 election will be emphasised as an important watershed for the authors of such fiction. The analysis will then turn to George Dangerfield's tripartite of rebellions, famously outlined in *The Strange Death of Liberal England*. Emphasising the significant influence such upheavals had on visions of foreign invasion, this chapter will explore how these rebellions were interpreted by the literature's authorship. The 'Women's Rebellion', for example, seemed to represent far more than a call for franchise extension. Instead, the campaign is regularly presented as a feminist revolt, questioning British gender values and undermining masculine virtues. Similarly, the 'Workers Rebellion' is depicted as revolutionary in character, transforming Britain's increasing industrial unrest into sensationalist narratives of class conflict. The Irish crisis or 'Tory Rebellion', by contrast, is generally advocated rather than excoriated, supported as a necessary defence of the Union against unscrupulous political intrigue.

By explicitly rooting these narratives in the political controversies of the Edwardian period, this chapter will re-emphasise the thematic importance of domestic political upheaval within British invasion literature. In turn, this analysis will further explore the political ideology of the genre's authorship. Rather than strictly 'Tory' in nature, a significant majority of such writers echoed the ideas of the 'Die-Hard' opposition to the Parliament Bill, the staunchly unionist signatories of the Ulster and British Covenants, and popular leagues such

as the Anti-Socialist Union.<sup>1</sup> The representation of domestic political issues in invasion narratives draws closer parallels with Geoffrey Searle's definition of the 'Radical Right' than with the parliamentary Conservative Party. Finally, this chapter will re-assert the analytical value of the Edwardian Crisis. The tenor of many invasion narratives highlights that 'crisis' is an inherently subjective concept. Though Dangerfield's vision of narrowly avoided revolution now appears exaggerated, many Edwardians subscribed to such ideas, and expressed genuine fears for Britain's political future. The Edwardian Crisis may be a misleading political narrative, then, but it is still a valuable concept for understanding and analysing contemporary anxieties.

## 4.2 - Perfidious Liberals

While British invasion literature was not necessarily a Tory product, it is fair to say that it was generally anti-Liberal in nature.<sup>2</sup> This is not altogether surprising. Usually conceived with the need for greater military and naval preparation in mind, the party of peace, retrenchment, and reform were a natural target for the authors of such narratives. In the genre-defining *The Battle of Dorking* (1871) George Chesney, who was later elected Conservative MP for Oxford City, pointedly lamented that British politics "had become a mere bidding for Radical votes".<sup>3</sup> This voiced a broader authorial fear, as identified by Samuel Hynes, that the transfer of power "from the traditional ruling classes to the lower classes" triggered by

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<sup>1</sup> For the 'Die-Hard' peers or 'ditchers' see G. D. Phillips, *The Diehards: Aristocratic Society and Politics in Edwardian England* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 111-158 and R. Jenkins, *Mr Balfour's Poodle: an Account of the Struggle between the House of Lords and the Government of Mr Asquith* (London: Collins, 1968), pp.193-268. On the British and Irish Covenants see W. S. Rodner, 'Leaguers, Covenanters, Moderates: British Support for Ulster, 1913-1914', *Eire-Ireland*, 17.3 (1982), pp. 68-85 and D. M. Jackson, *Popular Opposition to Irish Home Rule in Edwardian Britain* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009). For the Anti-Socialist Union see K. D. Brown, 'The Anti-Socialist Union, 1908-49', in *Essays in Anti-Labour History* (London: MacMillan, 1974), pp. 234-261, and F. Coetzee, *For Party or Country, Nationalism and the Dilemmas of Popular Conservatism in Edwardian England* (Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 101-106.

<sup>2</sup> This is confirmed by the second motif of A. Michael Matin's invasion literature typology (see section 1.3 above), in 'Securing Britain: Figures of Invasion in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Fiction', unpublished PhD thesis, Columbia University (1997), p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> G. T. Chesney and 'Saki' (H. H. Munro), *The Battle of Dorking and When William Came: A Story of London under the Hohenzollerns* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 47.

nineteenth century electoral reforms had “weaken[ed] England’s will to defend herself”.<sup>4</sup> Famously warning the British public in a speech at Whitby to “Be on your guard against alarmism”, William Gladstone’s response to the success of *The Battle of Dorking* embodied many of the liberal values that Chesney derided. Arguing that such appeals to military readiness ultimately called for “the spending of more and more of your money”, the Prime Minister dismissed invasion as a chimera: “It is only our pride, it is only our passions, it is only our follies, which can ever constitute a real danger to us”.<sup>5</sup> Such rhetoric contributed to Gladstone briefly becoming the genre’s personification of invasion scepticism. The pseudonymous *The Siege of London* (1885), in which the besiegers are a French expeditionary force, blamed Gladstone for “frittering away England’s power”. In a spontaneous outburst of popular anger upon news of invasion, the rioting of London’s “countless multitude” is not entirely wanton, as they significantly destroy “every public statue of Mr. Gladstone”.<sup>6</sup> Written in the midst of an election campaign by a writer of “strong Conservative sympathies”, I. F. Clarke suggests that this French attack was “the most convenient means of attacking the policies of the Liberal Party”.<sup>7</sup> Rather than a realistic military consideration, the threat of invasion had become a transparent party-political tool.

Anti-Liberalism is equally apparent in invasion narratives of the Edwardian period. One of the earliest indicators of this is the literature’s derogatory treatment of high-profile opponents of the South African War. Though the ‘Pro-Boer’ lobby increasingly appeared vindicated as the conflict drew to an inconclusive close, the initial ‘khaki fever’ that met the war’s outbreak caused much anger and recrimination to be directed towards advocates of peace.<sup>8</sup> Prominent Pro-Boers among the Liberal opposition, including the future statesmen

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<sup>4</sup> S. Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind* (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 1968), p. 34.

<sup>5</sup> *The Annual Register*, (London: Longmans, 1871), p. 108. See also I. F. Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War: Future Wars 1763-3749* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> ‘Posteritas’, *The Siege of London* (1885), in I. F. Clarke, ed, *British Future Fiction* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2001), p. 288.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 252.

<sup>8</sup> G. Searle, *A New England? Peace and War, 1886-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), pp. 285-6, see also J. Darwin, ‘The Weakest Link: Britain in South Africa’, in *The Empire Project, the Rise and Fall of the British World System, 1830-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 217-254.

David Lloyd George and Henry Campbell-Bannerman, were accused by Government supporters of effectively prolonging the war through their interference and protest.<sup>9</sup> This unfounded opinion was compounded by several invasion narratives, including the anonymously-written *The Sack of London* (1901). The novel plays out the common isolationist fear that Britain, militarily stretched by the South African War, could become the victim of French and Russian opportunism. Implicating the Pro-Boers for creating national schisms, and thus precipitating an invasion crisis, the narrator describes such men as “unworthy Englishmen covering their country with undeserved ignominy.” The Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain, by contrast, is praised for defending British and Uitlander interests, assuring that “the slender bonds which bound her Colonies to the Mother Country become stronger, and thenceforth unbreakable.”<sup>10</sup> Recalling the war from as late as 1907, Britain’s poor military performance was blamed by James Blyth in *The Tyranny* on “the lying hypocrisy of pro-Boers”. Accusing various Liberal figures of endeavouring “to create sympathy for the enemy”, Blyth considered such behaviour amounted to “fatuous treachery”.<sup>11</sup>

‘Pro-Boer’ was one of several interchangeable terms, alongside ‘Little Englanders’ and ‘peace at any price’ politicians, regularly used within invasion literature to describe Edwardian Liberals. Such language expressed contempt for a wide-range of political ideas associated with Liberalism, including anti-imperialism, anti-militarism, and naive inexperience in foreign policy. One particularly clear example of this sort of criticism is *The New Battle of Dorking* by F. N. Maude. Published anonymously in 1900 at the height of the South African War, the Army officer and military historian Maude is strident in denouncing parliamentary opposition to the conflict. With French invaders threatening to sack London, the narrative describes a paralysing stalemate in the Commons, attributed to “those d----d little-

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<sup>9</sup> For a lengthy account of the political splits set in motion by the conflict see E. Halevy, *A History of the English People, Epilogue Vol. I* (London: Ernest Benn, 1929), pp. 93-110.

<sup>10</sup> Anon., *The Sack of London in the Great French War of 1901* (London: F. V. White and Co., 1901), p. 20 and 33.

<sup>11</sup> J. Blyth, *The Tyranny* (London: William Heinemann, 1907), p. 217.

Englanders" filibustering with "stop-the-war speeches". One speaker directly links French invasion with Britain's ongoing military entanglement with the Boers, described as "our weight of awful responsibility". Calling for peace talks with the invaders, the member warns against increasing Britain's military burdens "by continuing to wage this horrible war that is devastating our own country". Infuriated by such talk, the narrator voices a wish "that the insensate Peace Party only possessed one throat, and that the breath could be then and there choked out of it."<sup>12</sup> Sharing this view, the incumbent Prime Minister effectively criminalises such sentiment, threatening the death penalty for any further anti-war incitement. Britain needed, in his words, to be "safeguarded against such villainous treachery and cowardice, masquerading under the guise of humanity and Christian forbearance".<sup>13</sup> The political target of this criticism could hardly be clearer. Steadfast courage and unity, however, are hardly foolproof safeguards against invasion. As one critic in *The Review of Reviews* asserted, it was wrong to assume "that 'Ladysmith and Mafeking' will suffice as rallying cries for the English when their capital is in danger."<sup>14</sup>

Prior to 1906, then, the anti-Liberalism of invasion literature was associated with an irresponsible and unpatriotic parliamentary Opposition. The landslide Liberal victory in the 1906 election fundamentally shifted this political context. Not only did the Liberals gain an outright majority of over a hundred, the victory helped unite the party after a decade of political division. In turn, the election was catastrophic for the Conservatives. Losing over half of their seats, the party was left with a rump of 156 MPs.<sup>15</sup> Many Tories, moreover, believed this mauling to represent a worrying sea-change, not simply an electoral bloody-nose. Consider this oft-quoted passage from the Conservative leader Arthur Balfour:

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<sup>12</sup> F. N. Maude, *The New Battle of Dorking* (London: G. Richards, 1900), pp.109-112. In James Blyth's *The Swoop of the Vulture* (London: Digby, Long and Co., 1909), in which the German Navy oversees a successful landing of troops in East Anglia, calls for surrender are met with a similar contempt. Asked by local businessmen to admit defeat, the Mayor of Lowestoft brands such men "radical skunks, who'd give your own wives to a Dutch stoker to save your beastly money", p51. In turn, one British General later refers to the "labour leaders and radical traitors who had wept crocodile tears over the Boers", p99.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>14</sup> 'A Prophecy Unfulfilled', *The Review of Reviews* (September 1900), p. 300.

<sup>15</sup> C. Rallings and M. Thrasher, eds, *British Electoral Facts 1832-2006*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 16-17.

C. B. [Campbell-Bannerman] is a mere cork, dancing on a torrent which he cannot control, and what is going on here is the faint echo of the same movement which has produced massacres in St Petersburg, riots in Vienna, and Socialist processions in Berlin.<sup>16</sup>

Balfour's pessimistic assessment was, no doubt, coloured by the loss of his Manchester East seat to the Liberals. Yet the landslide had been further increased by twenty-four Lib-Lab members, Labour candidates who had benefitted from Liberal withdrawals in their respective constituencies. This was seen by the defeated Conservatives as a cynical, self-serving and potentially dangerous alliance. Though the Liberals had arguably won a strong mandate independent of their Lib-Lab colleagues, and entirely separate from the twenty-nine non-pact Labour members, accusations of political extremism dogged the Liberal administrations in the run up to 1914.<sup>17</sup> Edward VII even suggested in 1908 that the Kaiser might fashion a pretext for invasion out of the threat of Liberalism, intervening to deliver his uncle "from the socialistic gang which is ruining the country".<sup>18</sup>

The invasion narratives that followed the 1906 election helped perpetuate this common practice of what might be called loose political equation. Such literature arguably strove to delegitimize the Liberals, consciously presenting the government as a dangerous coalition of radical political ideas. For these authors the distinctions between socialism, the fledgling Labour movement, and political Liberalism were essentially meaningless (or, at least, were represented as such). James Blyth's loaded reference to the "Campbell-Bannerman Keir Hardie Government" in *The Tyranny* is indicative of this trend.<sup>19</sup> His later work *The Peril of Pines Place* (1912) pushes this dynamic even further. The narrative directly links foreign invasion with the threat of domestic political upheaval. Set in the Ruritanian county of Daneshire, the story follows the fortunes of the young aristocrat Martial

<sup>16</sup> S. H. Zebel, *Balfour: a Political Biography* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 143. For a summary of the 1906 election campaign and Liberal victory see D. Brooks, *The Age of Upheaval, Edwardian Politics, 1899-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 90-96.

<sup>17</sup> Rallings and Thrasher, eds, *British Electoral Facts 1832-2006*, pp. 16-17, and Searle, *A New England?*, pp. 358-359.

<sup>18</sup> W. S. Blunt, *My Diaries: Being a Personal Narrative of Events, Part Two, 1900-1914* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1921), p. 210.

<sup>19</sup> *The Tyranny*, p. 177.



Primrose. Visiting the Primrose's country house with a university friend, the two undergraduates are intrigued by reports of suspicious activity at the neighbouring estate Pines Place. Having been mysteriously rendered unconscious while attempting to approach the manor house, they seek the help of the renowned detective Harold Milbank and the popular demagogue Lord Sudbury to solve the mystery.<sup>20</sup> Between them they uncover a plot to use Pines Place as the staging post for both invasion and popular uprising, the dual action of an unnamed foreign aggressor and Britain's revolutionary "Labour Leaders". "Civil war there had been in England before, but not", the narrator exhorts, "for the despicable purposes of...placing the powers of the realm in the hands of the inexperienced and greedy agitators for dishonest Socialism".<sup>21</sup> Before the foreign intrigue is able to convert rebellion into revolution, the army intervenes, the rebel leaders are killed, and the radicalised workers are narrowly converted back to patriotic decency.

Praising *The Peril of Pines Place* as "good melodrama for two-thirds of the way", one review suggested the book would have been improved "if its author had been more moderate in his diatribes against the Socialist party. Had he been less emphatic, he would have been more convincing."<sup>22</sup> Set in an unspecified near-future, Blyth's Socialist party is really an amalgamation of the Liberal and Labour Parties. Published in the aftermath of the Parliament Act controversy, *The Peril of Pines Place* serves as a stinging critique of the 'socialistic' Asquith administration. Blyth is generous in his criticism. Condemning many aspect of contemporary Britain over the course of the narrative, he laments the notion that "democracy had gained such power as to have influence in Parliament", and accuses the Cabinet of advocating "the abolition of the Monarchy, the House of Lords, and of individual

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<sup>20</sup> The detective Harold Milbank had previously appeared in Blyth's crime novel *The Diamond and the Lady* (London: Digby, Long and Co., 1908).

<sup>21</sup> J. Blyth, *The Peril of Pines Place* (London: F. V. White and Co., 1912), p. 102. As the narrator further explains, "this story concerns a suppressed attempt at revolution and at foreign invasion, which was skilfully hidden from the nation in order to avoid exciting the popular fury of the patriotic party...fostering an internal insurrection in a country at peace with the intending invaders, the actual abettors and purse-bearers of the uprising", p. 104.

<sup>22</sup> 'The Peril of Pine's Place', *The Academy*, 2073 (27<sup>th</sup> January 1912), p. 112.

rights to property”.<sup>23</sup> The revolutionary coup narrowly avoided at Pines Place is portrayed as the direct product of a changing parliamentary system, where “traitors and vulgar self-seekers were permitted to order well-bred, educated, wise, and experienced gentlemen in their sayings and doings”.<sup>24</sup> Such a state of affairs can only be addressed by direct, unwavering action: “court martial not conciliation” for those inside the House; and “a little bloodshed” for those “dissatisfied mongrels” outside of it, rebellious workers who “would never know their place until they had been decimated by lead and steel”.<sup>25</sup> Identifying the dangers of democratisation and parliamentary reform with characteristic extremism, Blyth’s novel was arguably shaped as much by anti-Liberal sentiment as it was by fears of socialist revolution.

As *The Peril of Pines Place* demonstrates, the Edwardian political climate was one in which Liberalism and socialism were often erroneously conflated. This tendency is well-explained by Searle in his article ‘The ‘Revolt from the Right’ in Edwardian Britain’. While prominent figures on the ‘Radical Right’ often criticised “class politics”, this phrase was rarely aimed at proponents of revolutionary socialism. Instead, it usually denoted opposition to the fiscal approach and social welfare policies of the Liberal Government. To such opponents, Searle continues, “‘socialism’ meant a ‘materialistic’ approach to politics – the kind of approach which encouraged the Liberals to cling to power by offering concessions to a variety of militant pressure groups”.<sup>26</sup> Though Irish nationalism and the Labour Party were the primary examples of this trend, a wide variety of other interest groups and campaigns could be similarly associated. As the party of free trade economics, temperance, and non-conformist religion, with a cabinet boasting well-known Pro-Boers and, in the case of Richard Haldane, Germanophiles, the Liberals were not simply socialistic, they were theoretically pacifistic, pro-German, anti-Imperial, and anti-Anglican. Critical representation of the Liberal

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<sup>23</sup> *The Peril of Pines Place*, pp. 205 and 88.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 231.

<sup>26</sup> G. Searle, ‘The ‘Revolt from the Right’ in Edwardian Britain’, in P. Kennedy and A. Nicholls, eds, *Nationalist and Racist Movements in Britain and Germany before 1914* (London and Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1981), p. 23.

Party in Edwardian invasion narratives, as such, often referred to a bizarre collection of politically undesirable positions. Explaining the lack of British resistance to German advance in *The Invasion of 1910* (1906), Le Queux implicates the Liberals in all but name, “The catchword phrase, ‘peace, retrenchment, and reform,’ so long dinned into the ears of the electorate by the pro-German party and by every socialistic demagogue, had sunk deeply into the minds of the people”.<sup>27</sup> In similarly broad groupings, Blyth’s *Ichabod* (1910) chastises “the Little Englanders, the pro-Boers, the Socialists, and the Labour members”, while *The History of the Decline and Fall of the British Empire* (1884) criticises “total abstainers, peace-at-any-price people, communists and roughs” for carrying the Liberals back into power.<sup>28</sup>

Such ideas were rooted in the well-established political given, among Tories at least, that Liberals could not be trusted with foreign and defence policy.<sup>29</sup> In his novel *The Death Trap* (1907), Robert Cole uses a conversation between the French President and his Prime Minister as a vehicle for just such criticism. Coerced into an alliance with Germany, the statesmen direct their anger at Britain for resisting calls to transform the *Entente Cordiale* into a binding military agreement. Both men, however, see Britain’s diplomatic incompetence as the product of internal political weakness:

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<sup>27</sup> W. Le Queux, *The Invasion of 1910*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1906), p. 219. This idea of an anti-war (and thus pro-German) Liberal Party also appears in Kipling’s short story ‘The Edge of the Evening’. Set with the grounds of “an enormous Georgian pile” symbolically overlooking the Channel, the homeowner tells his guests how he recently stumbled across two suspicious aeronauts (presumed to be Germans) during a round of Golf with several friends. Inadvertently killing both intruders, the group decide to dispose of the men’s bi-plane and hush-up the affair, fearing the influence of political partisanship should an official inquiry be made into the incident: “It’s our necks or Armageddon. Which do you think this Government would choose?”, *A Diversity of Creatures*, Centenary ed. (London, 1966), p. 293.

<sup>28</sup> J. Blyth, *Ichabod* (London: John Milne, 1910), p. 296, Edwarda Gibbon, pseud., ‘History of the Decline and Fall of the British Empire’, *Ye Leadenhalle Presse Pamphlets*, 1 (1884), p. 20.

<sup>29</sup> The early-Edwardian Liberal Party continued to be associated with the foreign policy controversies of the Gladstone era, such as the high-profile death of General Gordon and the two failed Irish Home Rule bills. This negative reputation was compounded by the ‘Khaki Election’ of 1900, in which the Liberals fought (unsuccessfully) on an anti-war, social reform ticket. For the debate surrounding the influence of pro-war sentiment on this election see R. Price, *An Imperial War and the British Working Class: Working Class Attitudes and Reactions to the Boer War, 1899-1902* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), and more recently, I. Sharpe, ‘Empire, Patriotism and the Working-Class Electorate: The 1900 General Election in the Battersea Constituency’, *Parliamentary History*, 28.3 (2009), pp. 392-412.

The Conservatives are inefficient frauds, but the Liberals are traitors. You know their views. Little Englandism, no Empire, Home Rule for every country and every parish, every one equal, and themselves the chiefs. No drastic line of policy to be taken, but every one to do as he likes; no interference with the liberty of the subject. Oh, I know them all! They will sacrifice anything to keep them in power. Meanwhile, Germany knocks their Empire to pieces.<sup>30</sup>

A similar sentiment is struck in A. J. Dawson's *The Message* (1907). Referring to the 1906 election, the narrator recalls a "wave of anti-nationalism", popular sentiment which helped establish "the notorious administration which subsequently became known as 'The Destroyers'". Ironically named after a class of warship, Dawson's notorious Liberals "in their truckling to Demos" cut military and naval spending in half, before presiding over a disastrous defensive campaign against the German invasion.<sup>31</sup> This dynamic reaches a pitch in Horace Newte's dystopian novel *The Master Beast* (1907). The narrative describes Britain's journey towards German invasion and subsequent socialist revolution. Newte depicts a Liberal Party that has been tricked into cutting the size of the Army by unscrupulous Germans, who recognise "the powerful allies they possessed in the Liberal and Radical minded". Blamed for "piloting the ship of State on to the rocks of destruction", an angry anti-Liberal lynch mob descends on Westminster upon news of invasion, "leaving the betrayers of England, with swollen faces and staring eyes, suspended from lamp-posts and trees".<sup>32</sup>

The treatment of social and welfare reform in British invasion literature offers further insight on the largely anti-Liberal quality of such narratives. Edwardian attitudes to social reform, however, were not straightforwardly defined by Conservative opposition and Liberal support. The Education Act of 1902 here provides a case in point. Representing to its advocates an important step in the administrative rationalisation of education, the act

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<sup>30</sup> Cole, *The Death Trap* (1907), in Clarke, ed, *British Future Fiction, Vol. 7: Disasters to Come*, p. 25.

<sup>31</sup> A. J. Dawson, *The Message* (Boston MA: Dana Estes and Co., 1907), pp. 91 and 113.

<sup>32</sup> H. W. C. Newte, *The Master Beast* (London: Rebman, 1907), pp. 33-35 and 56-57.

generated controversy through granting rate aid to Anglican schools, seemingly at the expense of non-conformist educational provision. As such, this measure of reform was highly unpopular in Liberal strongholds, and led to a prolonged and damaging protest campaign.<sup>33</sup> Criticism of education reform in contemporary invasion narratives, as a result, is not straightforwardly anti-Liberal in nature. What appears instead is a general mistrust of mass education. In Walter Wood's *The Enemy in our Midst* (1906), the narrator refers to the "primitive peoples" of the more remote parts of Britain, "who had enjoyed the dubious advantage of a free school education and nothing beyond it".<sup>34</sup> Similarly, C. A. Clarke's portrayal of a guilt-ridden Edward VII in *Starved into Surrender* (1904) sees him criticise philanthropic libraries, providing men with books "to muddle their brains, and set them arguing".<sup>35</sup> Wood and Clarke's language betrays a curious reactionary fear concerning mass literacy and social stability. State provision of education is here interpreted as a dangerous and unnecessary social provision, represented by an empowered yet highly irrational mass populace.

Such anti-education sentiment was not universal in the literature, nor did it reflect authorial attitudes to social reform in general. In this regard the authorship mirrored the contemporary Edwardian debate. Many political commentators saw interventionist social policy as pragmatic rather than altruistic, a necessary promotion of efficiency to increase British military and economic competitiveness. For this, as Powell explains, "a healthy, educated, technically literate workforce was a *sine qua non*."<sup>36</sup> Yet much disagreement existed regarding how said reforms should be enacted, and how the necessary money was to be raised. The Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain, for example, saw tariff reform as the natural answer. With the introduction of a preferential system of duties, funds for social reform could be raised by the taxation of non-imperial imports, while any shortfall would be offset by significant increases in colonial and dominion trade. Conservative opposition to the

<sup>33</sup> Searle, *A New England?*, pp. 329-334.

<sup>34</sup> W. Wood, *The Enemy in our Midst, The Story of a Raid on England* (London: John Long, 1906), p. 95.

<sup>35</sup> C. A. Clarke, *Starved into Surrender* (London: C. W. Daniel, 1904), p. 72.

<sup>36</sup> D. Powell, *The Edwardian Crisis: Britain 1901-1914* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1996), p. 18.

landmark social reforms of “new liberalism” was thus in part economic, in protest against the principle of significantly increased taxation.<sup>37</sup> By the rejection of the People’s Budget in 1909, however, the debate had shifted from economics to politics. Warning of the “taint of Jacobinism” in Liberal reformist language, Lord Hugh Cecil arguing against the principle of state welfare, asserting that “to take what one man has and give it to another is unjust, even though the first man be rich and the second man poor.” Fearing the creeping influence of ‘state socialism’, figures such as Cecil had begun to see government-led social changes as a threat to private property, religious morality, and even political stability.<sup>38</sup>

The preferred model of social reform in invasion literature was something akin to the Chamberlain model, where social improvement comes as a by-product of wider schemes, such as economic reorganisation or conscription, rather than costly independent welfare policies. One of the most detailed considerations of social reform within the genre appears in George Griffith’s *The Lord of Labour*. Published posthumously in 1911, the narrative follows the adventures of Dyke Headworth, “a very creditable specimen of north country”, with a successful engineering business and a reputation for opposing both local capitalist excess and labour agitation.<sup>39</sup> Discovering a source of radium while visiting the Isle of Man, Headworth’s expertise in chemistry and geology help him to develop and manufacture the highly effective ‘radium rifle’. This technological breakthrough is timely, for in Hanover the German physicist Festus von Kunold has developed “demagnetising rays” able to reduce iron and steel to dust, with which he promises to deliver the Kaiser an “empire of the seas”.<sup>40</sup> In the conflict that follows, Headworth’s rifle gives Britain a narrow edge in what is heralded as “a new era of warfare”.<sup>41</sup> Griffith’s vision of future war is one of grand alliances, with

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<sup>37</sup> For the tariff reform campaign see E. H. H. Green, *The Crisis of Conservatism, The Politics, Economics and Ideology of the British Conservative Party, 1880-1914* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 194-206, and P. Cain, *Chamberlain and Tariff Reform* (London: Routledge/Thoemmes Press, 1996). On the Liberal Reforms and the idea of ‘new liberalism’ see J. R. Hay, *The Origins of the Liberal Welfare Reforms 1906-1914* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1975), and D. Gladstone, *The Twentieth-Century Welfare State* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1999).

<sup>38</sup> D. Read, *Edwardian England 1901-1915, Society and Politics* (London: Harrap, 1972), p. 102.

<sup>39</sup> G. Griffith, *The Lord of Labour* (London: F. V. White and Co., 1911), p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 44-5.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.

Britain, France, Italy, Turkey and Japan fighting against Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia. Though the British fleet is decimated by von Kunold's ray, aerial drones armed with radium bombs help to expel the German invader, before British troops advance far into Germany itself. With a peace treaty signed at The Hague after unconditional German surrender, Britain has taught the world that "a great and free nation, when it rises to the sense of the highest of all duties – the protection of country, home, and hearth – has never yet been conquered".<sup>42</sup>

*The Lord of Labour* was the last novel of one of invasion literature's great eccentrics. Described in his *Daily Mail* obituary as a "sailor, stock-rider, butcher, school-master, journalist, and story-writer", Griffith's varied achievements included circumnavigating the globe in a record-breaking sixty-four days.<sup>43</sup> Written in 1906, the narrative offers an alternative model of welfare reform to that which the Liberals eventually pursued. In Griffith's vision, German invasion provides a much needed catalyst for a process of significant social reorganisation. Following the formation of a Home Defence Council with the task of preparing British resistance, the nation's populace is indiscriminately mobilised:

Even the tramps and the unemployed were not neglected...every able-bodied man between eighteen and fifty was taken out of the shelters and the casual wards, clad in a sort of khaki semi-uniform, given liberal rations and a shilling a day, and set to work digging trenches in places selected for defence...<sup>44</sup>

With unemployment, charity, and begging declared illegal, Britain's hour of need has become her social salvation, as finally the United Kingdom "had set its house in order, and was conducting its internal affairs in a rational manner."<sup>45</sup> The society that emerges out of

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 310.

<sup>43</sup> 'Death of Mr. Geo. Griffith', *Daily Mail* (5<sup>th</sup> June 1906), p. 5. *The Lord of Labour* was in part dictated by Griffith while on his death bed, and suffers for its sadly rushed execution. As Bleiler has suggested, it is highly likely that had Griffith lived longer the novel "would have undergone a different development and taken different paths", E. F. Bleiler, *Science-Fiction: The Early Years* (Kent OH: Kent State University Press, 1990), p. 310.

<sup>44</sup> *The Lord of Labour*, p. 144.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 145.

these reforms arguably represents Griffith's own socio-economic ideal uncomfortably expanded, whereby the model of "a small business with a paternalistic boss and filial skilled workmen" has been applied to the nation at large.<sup>46</sup> Headworth acts as the exemplary employer in this regard. A model efficient, he keeps "the same early hours as the half-dozen skilled workmen that he employ[s]", before returning to his scientific research in the evening from which he prospers "both mentally and materially".<sup>47</sup> This working arrangement is much appreciated by his employees. "He's a reet good sort is Dyke", attests one devoted worker. "If all employers was like him there'd be a lot more brass made and no strikes, except among those as does'na want to work".<sup>48</sup> Griffith's implication here is clear: the need to defend effectively managed class relations. His workers distance themselves from their radicalised contemporaries because they value stability over social upheaval, patriotism over equality, and vertical solidarities over class divisions.

The anti-Liberalism of Edwardian invasion literature, then, came in a number of forms: criticism of the Pro-Boer lobby during the South African War; associating the Liberal Party with 'socialism' and other forms of political extremism; stressing Liberal incompetence in matters of foreign and defence policy; and promoting alternative models of social reform. Such pronounced anti-Liberalism positions invasion narratives far closer to the ideology of the 'Radical Right' than to the more conciliatory attitudes of mainstream Conservatism. This brand of unashamed partisanship, it should be noted, was often paradoxically accompanied by criticism of the British 'party spirit', a phenomenon seen to be crippling the nation's politics. While Clarke's *Starved into Surrender* bemoans the lack of parliamentary efficiency, with "too many fads, [and] too many little parties", *The New Battle of Dorking* called for men "without a taint of party spirit, and only steadfast Imperial statesmanship, [to] steer us safely through the maze of shoals ahead of us".<sup>49</sup> In *The Message* Dawson refers to the concept as "that life-sapping curse of British politics", which led "otherwise honourable men to

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<sup>46</sup> Bleiler, *Science Fiction*, p. 310.

<sup>47</sup> *The Lord of Labour*, p. 5.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p77-8.

<sup>49</sup> *Starved into Surrender*, p. 41, *The New Battle of Dorking*, p. 221.



oppose with all their strength the measures of their party opponents, even in the face of their country's dire need."<sup>50</sup> These ideas were shared by H. G. Wells, who in his speculative work *Anticipations* (1899) described the Commons as "the seat of party conflicts, a faction fight of initiated persons, that has long ceased to bear any relation to current social processes".<sup>51</sup>

The fact that figures as diverse as Wells and Dawson were in agreement on this issue highlights the level of frustration party politics generated across the Edwardian political spectrum. Many advocates of "the great principle – Efficiency", as Searle has explored, considered the party system to have run its course. Having once catered for "divisions and ideals", party politics had become an inefficient evil that hamstrung operations at Westminster.<sup>52</sup> As Lord Rosebery argued, the party system was both inefficient and elitist:

It puts into place not the fittest but the most eligible, from the party point of view – that is, very often, the worst. Efficiency implies the rule of the fittest; party means the rule of something else – not the unfittest, but of the few fit, the accidentally not unfit, and the glaringly unfit.<sup>53</sup>

Despite such enthusiastic sentiment, political alternatives to the party system remained remote throughout the Edwardian period. Calls in 1900 for Rosebery to head "a national cabinet" modelled on the principles of efficiency, in which "all party issues must be superseded by a national policy", failed to address the well-established divisions, erroneous or otherwise, between Liberalism and Conservatism.<sup>54</sup> Lloyd George's 1910 memorandum proposing the possibility of coalition to break the impasse surrounding the Parliament Act, in which he even suggested debating the issue of compulsory service, foundered in similar circumstances.<sup>55</sup> The failure of these progressive proposals arguably highlights the

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<sup>50</sup> *The Message*, p. 47.

<sup>51</sup> H. G. Wells, *Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress upon Human Life and Thought* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1899), p. 110.

<sup>52</sup> G. R. Searle, *The Quest for National Efficiency: A Study in British Politics and Political Thought, 1899-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), pp. 92-95.

<sup>53</sup> Foreword to A. Stead, *Great Japan: A Study of National Efficiency*, (London: John Lane, 1906), x.

<sup>54</sup> 'Lord Rosebery and a National Cabinet, *Fortnightly Review*, 67.402 (1900), p. 1070. For the 'national cabinet' campaign see Searle, *The Quest for National Efficiency*, pp. 107-141.

<sup>55</sup> R. J. Scally, *The Origins of the Lloyd George Coalition, The Politics of Social-Imperialism, 1900-1918* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 19.

continuing strength of party politics in this period, and in turn, emphasises the size of the challenge that faced the efficiency movement.

### 4.3 - The Persistent Sisterhood

Just as invasion literature can be said to have been generally anti-Liberal in nature, such narratives were equally shaped by a near-universal opposition to the female suffrage campaign. Before analysing these representations, it is important to stress the *longue durée* of the movement for an extended franchise. Though widely remembered as one of the defining images of Edwardian Britain, this campaign had a significant pre-history. When E. E. Mills critically refers in *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire* to “the emancipated Englishwoman of the age”, he derides a process stretching back to John Stuart Mill and the defeated 1866 reform bill, the point at which Pugh suggests female suffrage had first become a serious political question.<sup>56</sup> Such references within invasion narratives to female suffrage, and more broadly to women’s rights and ideals of feminine behaviour, arguably reacted against long-term calls for social and political change, rather than simply responding to contemporary political events. In assessing these opinions, Brian Harrison’s categorisation of anti-suffrage thought in his work *Separate Spheres* has provided a valuable framework. These categories, as Harrison explains,

range from the anti-suffragist whose conservatism on this question is instinctive, through the opponent of particular modes of granting woman suffrage, to the opponent of woman suffrage *tout court* and, finally, to that relatively small category: the opponents of women.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> M. Pugh, *The March of the Women, A Revisionist Analysis of the Campaign for Women’s Suffrage 1866-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 16. For more on the women’s suffrage campaign see Hynes, ‘The Trouble with Women’, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*, pp. 172-211, Powell, ‘Suffragism and Feminism’, *The Edwardian Crisis*, pp. 68-97, A. Rosen, *Rise-Up Women!, The Militant Campaign of the Women’s Social and Political Union 1903-1914* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), and J. Purvis and S. S. Holton, eds, *Votes for Women* (London: Routledge, 2000).

<sup>57</sup> B. Harrison, *Separate Spheres, The Opposition to Women’s Suffrage in Britain*, (London: Croom Helm, 1978), p. 23.

Aspects of all four of these ideological positions appear within the Edwardian invasion genre, as will be explored below. In *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, Dangerfield described “The Women’s Rebellion” as the rejection of “a moribund, a respectable, a smothering security”. This is perhaps the best way of understanding the attitudes of these authors, as pillars of this smothering status quo.<sup>58</sup> For the vast majority of such writers, the female suffrage campaign was an absurd and incomprehensible political development.

As the notorious face of the militant suffrage campaign, Emmeline Pankhurst’s Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU) was singled out by several authors of invasion literature for particular criticism, condemnation, and ridicule. This standard is well-captured by William Le Queux in *The Unknown Tomorrow* (1910). Set in 1935, the narrator informs the reader that the women’s suffrage movement “had years ago fizzled out because the press, by common consent, had resolved not to further report its ridiculous martyrdoms”.<sup>59</sup> Entering the more abjectly bizarre plot of Sidney Mattingly’s *The Terror by Night* (1913), protesting suffragettes, wearing “the colours which all law-abiding citizens had learnt to dread”, cut all communications north of London as German zeppelins foray into northern Scotland. Though the author does not suggest that the two parties are operating in tandem, the implication is that internal political controversy is indirectly benefitting the invaders. As the fictional foreign secretary rages upon hearing of the protestors’ actions, “Nothing is safe from these foolish women”.<sup>60</sup> Even more scathing in tone is the anonymously-written *Red England* (1909), a work which aims to highlight the good grace with which such calls for electoral reform were being met in Edwardian Britain. In a less tolerant society, such as the transient revolutionary regime imagined in the narrative, the campaign would not be suffered at all. This frank opinion is regularly emphasised by the author, such as during this description of the opening riots of the revolution:

<sup>58</sup> G. Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (London: Constable, 1936), p. 138.

<sup>59</sup> W. Le Queux, *The Unknown Tomorrow: How the Rich Fared at the Hands of the Poor Together with a Full Account of the Social Revolution in England* (London: F. V. White and Co., 1910), p. 3. Interestingly, Le Queux here correctly predicts (consciously or otherwise) that the suffragette campaign would eventually see fatalities, namely Emily Davison’s death following injuries sustained from the King’s horse during the Epsom Derby in 1913.

<sup>60</sup> S. Mattingly, *The Terror by Night* (London: Pearson, 1913), p. 40.

...the persistent sisterhood who for years had been making the lives of English politicians unhappy by demanding votes for their sex was not to be absent on this great historic occasion, and a small squad of them attempted to rush from the Embankment through the serried ranks of the revolutionists towards the House waving a banner and shrieking 'Votes for Women!' But this time they had to deal with men who saw no fun in politics, and they were bundled and turned back with a roughness that the capitalist policeman never achieved.<sup>61</sup>

Reduced as a political issue to the 'fun in politics', the female suffrage campaign appears at best an amusing side-show, and at worst an irrelevant distraction.

Such instinctive opposition was often influenced by the prominent anti-suffrage concept of 'separate spheres', whereby women did not belong in the public sphere of politics. By this logic, the idea of granting women the vote, to return to *Red England*, "was based on an entirely erroneous theory of values".<sup>62</sup> Many politicians, including the Liberal MP and diplomat James Bryce, argued that women enjoyed "greater influence in other ways...than the franchise would give them."<sup>63</sup> One such avenue of persuasion was the principle of emotional influence. This was a model of feminine influence, moreover, that was regularly harnessed by the campaign for compulsory military service. Speaking at the annual general meeting of the National Service League in 1913, Lord Roberts stressed the crucial role women could play in the compulsory service movement, "women might not have votes, but they have the power of persuasion and influence...if they would make up their minds never to marry a man who had not been properly drilled the country would soon be converted."<sup>64</sup> Several years earlier in 1909, the NSL-sponsored play *A Nation in Arms* had made a similar appeal. In asking one of the young female characters to ensure her male admirers all volunteered for military service, the Territorial officer Bruce offers the following example, "Why, in Switzerland where everyone does his share, the girls won't look at a

<sup>61</sup> Anon., *Red England: A Tale of the Socialist Terror* (London: John Milne, 1909), pp. 85-6.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 200.

<sup>63</sup> Quoted in Harrison, *Separate Spheres*, p. 81.

<sup>64</sup> 'The Annual General Meeting', *The Nation in Arms*, 8.6 (Summer 1913), p. 370.

fellow who isn't fit to be a citizen soldier. No soldier – no sweetheart. That's how it works there.”<sup>65</sup> In a world of invasion scares, then, women were depended on to conform, not to strive for political advancement. When Leila Dolton of *The Lord of Labour* assures another character she is “not one of those unpleasant persons who are known as advanced women”, it is clear what her euphemism concerns.<sup>66</sup>

For a significant minority of the authorship, however, the female suffrage campaign posed a far greater threat to the established order than simply the possibility of women being granted the vote. After all, by the Edwardian period the general political consensus was that a measure of franchise reform was both necessary and unavoidable.<sup>67</sup> Yet as Hynes points out in *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*, the franchise question was difficult to separate from a variety of other social issues such as divorce laws, property rights, and contraception. As such, “even the most moderate move toward liberation seemed a rush towards chaos.”<sup>68</sup> Such conservatism became further entrenched as the WSPU turned to direct action, a tactical change that was often unjustly described through a medical terminology of hysteria.<sup>69</sup> There was also a sense, particularly among sympathetic politicians, that the campaign had spiralled out of control. Criticising the outburst of violent protest as wholly counter-productive, Lloyd George accused the increasingly radical Christabel Pankhurst, whose 1913 pamphlet *The Great Scourge and How to End It* argued that men had created a venereal disease epidemic, of having “lost all sense of proportion and of reality.”<sup>70</sup> Perhaps

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<sup>65</sup> B. S. Townroe, *A Nation in Arms* (London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co., 1909), p. 33. The NSL continually used Switzerland as an example of the benefits of conscription. In 1907 a 27-strong NSL committee of inquiry, which, “in the interests of balance, contained Labour and Liberal M.P.s, local government representatives, and trade unionists”, visited the country to study the Swiss conscription system, H. Moon, ‘The Invasion of the United Kingdom: Public Controversy and Official Planning’, unpublished PhD thesis (University of London, 1968), p. 105. For the continued importance of the Swiss model see regular articles in *The Nation in Arms*, such as Colonel C. Favre, ‘Military Service and the Referendum in Switzerland’, 6.2 (February 1911), and G. G. Coulton, ‘National Service and National Industry in Switzerland’, 8.7 (Autumn 1913).

<sup>66</sup> *The Lord of Labour*, p. 61.

<sup>67</sup> For more on the party politics of the suffrage campaign see C. Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain 1866-1914* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), pp. 102-177.

<sup>68</sup> Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*, p. 211.

<sup>69</sup> See, for example, Sir Almroth Wright's famous diatribe *The Unexpurgated Case against Woman Suffrage*, (London: Constable, 1913).

<sup>70</sup> Read, *Edwardian England*, p. 221.

more than any other factor, opponents of the female suffrage campaign feared that any such reforms would represent the thin end of the wedge. Inevitably leading to calls for universal adult suffrage, and thus a working-class electoral majority, the suffrage movement was seen as a Pandora's box that, when opened, "would expose British society to unending disasters". In the words of the Victorian historian Goldwin Smith, women's suffrage was conceivably "the crowbar by which the next barrier will be speedily forced."<sup>71</sup>

One interesting illustration of the anti-suffrage dynamic within invasion literature can be found in W. T. Stead's withering review of *An Englishman's Home* during its opening run at Wyndham's Theatre. Satirising the success of the Territorial Force publicity drive discussed in the last chapter, Stead asks whether other popular movements might consider the benefits of training their members militarily:

It will be useful to know what Mrs Pankhurst and her militant Suffragettes think of doing in this direction. Will they set an example to the decadent young men by forming an Amazon legion for the defence of hearth and home?...The existence of one hundred thousand women trained to shoot straight and subject to military discipline would probably have a very good effect on public opinion at home even if it produced no effect abroad.<sup>72</sup>

This was in part the tongue-in-cheek analysis of a long-standing anti-militarist. Yet Stead's comically inverted notion of arming Britain's womanhood cut to the heart of both the compulsory service debate and the growing concerns surrounding Edwardian gender relations. As Harrison has argued, anti-suffrage campaigners such as the veteran Unionist Lord Cromer, president of the National League for Opposing Women's Suffrage, often had mounting German armaments at the back of their minds. Speaking at Manchester in late 1910, Cromer was candid about such fears, "the German man is manly, and the German woman is womanly...can we hope to compete with such a nation as this, if we war against nature, and endeavour to invert the natural roles of the sexes? We cannot do so."<sup>73</sup> In a letter to *The Saturday Review* the previous year one correspondent had expressed very

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<sup>71</sup> G. Smith, 'Female Suffrage', *Macmillan's Magazine*, 30.176 (1874), in Pugh, *The March of the Women*, p. 45.

<sup>72</sup> 'An Englishman's Home', *Review of Reviews*, 39.230 (1909), p. 124.

<sup>73</sup> Lord Cromer, *Anti-Suffrage Review* (November 1910), in Harrison, *Separate Spheres*, p. 34.

similar fears. Arguing that the only answer to “the noisy sisterhood” was universal military service, he considered the British male emasculated, having “voluntarily renounced the great male quality on which the sound contention rests that no woman...is fit for the vote, simply because, being a woman, she cannot fight.”<sup>74</sup> For such commentators Britain could not maintain her global predominance with this poorly defined gender balance, where men shirked from military service and women strove for political representation.

These ideas echo many of the issues of national identity discussed in the second chapter. Such writers and campaigners were not just expressing fears over what Élie Halévy later called the “Feminist Revolt”, of which the women’s suffrage campaign was “no more than the most visible manifestation of an increasingly dynamic and self-confident feminist movement in Edwardian Britain”.<sup>75</sup> They were also highlighting equally serious concerns regarding the state of British masculine identity, or as A. Michael Matin describes it, the “perceived ‘effeminization’ of the British fighting man”.<sup>76</sup> The belief was developing among some that, as Walter Wood suggests in *The Enemy in our Midst*, “men seem to have become effeminate and women manly”.<sup>77</sup> Much of this sense of crisis, as has been highlighted by recent scholarly research into Australian invasion literature of the same period, was linked to the notion of urban emasculation. Enfeebling men and empowering women, cities were feared to be having a corrosive effect on the dominion’s gender balance. Modern civilisation is thus represented in such literature as “a conspiracy against the male”,

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<sup>74</sup> ‘Women’s Suffrage and Universal Military Service’, T. M. Horsfall letter to *The Saturday Review*, 107.2775 (2<sup>nd</sup> January 1909), p. 16.

<sup>75</sup> E. Halévy, *A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century – VI: The Rule of Democracy 1905-1914 (Book II)* (London: Ernest Benn, 1934), p. 486, Powell, *The Edwardian Crisis*, p. 94. For more on the late-Victorian feminist movement see L. Bland, *Banishing the Beast: English Feminism and Sexual Morality, 1885-1914* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995).

<sup>76</sup> Matin, ‘Securing Britain’, p. 37. For work on Edwardian masculinity identity see M. Paris, *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850-2000* (London: Reaktion, 2000), pp. 83-109, J. A. Mangan and J. Walvin, eds, *Manliness and Morality: Middle-class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), J. Maguire, ‘Images of Manliness and Competing Ways of Living in Late Victorian and Edwardian Britain’, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 3.3 (1986), pp. 265-287, and G. Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire, and the Imagining of Masculinity* (London: Routledge, 1994).

<sup>77</sup> *The Enemy in our Midst*, p. 115.

while cities are “female siren[s], dangerously seductive, quick-witted but shallow”.<sup>78</sup> As Johnny Bell has explored in his article *The Gendering of Disaster*, these fears were influenced by the ‘Australian legend’, a colonial expression of the British rural idyll, which juxtaposed visions of feminine urban degeneracy with the harsh, masculine hinterland of the bush. In the multiple ‘yellow peril’ Australian invasion narratives identified by Bell, including *The Yellow Wave* (1897) and *The Australian Crisis* (1909), it is “the hardy pioneers” from “the arid heart of the Continent” that save Australia’s decadent cities in their hour of need.<sup>79</sup> Yet in *The Celestial Hand* (1903) by Joyce Vincent it is a heroine, Ella Pritchard, “who comes to the rescue of race and nation”. Highly unusually in this regard, Bell presents *The Celestial Hand* as an important contribution to the “crisis of masculinity” debate in Edwardian Australia.<sup>80</sup>

While generally less pronounced than their Australian equivalents, this gendered theme of the feminine city is reworked in several British invasion narratives, such as *The Master Beast* by Horace Newte. An author and playwright who specialised in writing one-act plays, *The Master Beast* was Newte’s first effort at writing a novel.<sup>81</sup> Utilising the familiar Wellsian technique of *When the Sleeper Wakes*, the narrative tells the story of a moderate socialist who, losing consciousness in a riot in 1911, wakes up over a hundred years later in a dystopian future. The subtitle of the book, *Being a True Account of the Ruthless Tyranny Inflicted on the British People by Socialism*, neatly encapsulates its author’s fears. Following a successful German invasion (described above), the German-imposed regime collapses after a matter of years, and is replaced by a socialist government. Though elected on the basis of universal suffrage, a political system ultimately develops in which “for all its fine

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<sup>78</sup> D. Walker, ‘Shooting Mabel: Warrior Masculinity and Asian Invasion’, *History Australia*, 2.3 (2005), p. 89.7, J. Docker, *The Nervous Nineties – Australian Cultural Life in the 1890’s* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press Australia, 1991), p. 52.

<sup>79</sup> C. H. Kirmness, *The Australian Crisis*, in J. A. Bell, ‘The Gendering of Disaster: Cities and City Manhood in Joyce Vincent’s *The Celestial Hand*’, *Australian Historical Studies*, 41.1 (2010), pp. 46-47.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 44 and 55-56.

<sup>81</sup> For limited biography see ‘Mr. Horace Newte’, *The Times* (31<sup>st</sup> December 1949), p. 7, and ‘The Master Beast’, *Gloucester Citizen* (16<sup>th</sup> December 1907).



phrasing, Socialism...became the rule of an all-powerful bureaucracy".<sup>82</sup> Accurately criticised in *The Athenaeum* as a "crude and violent novel", Newte's vision of Britain under socialist rule includes public trials at which summary justice is delivered by the mob, and disturbing accounts of eugenicist state nurseries, where children are raised like 'chicks...reared on poultry farms'.<sup>83</sup> The work also satirically represents a series of prominent Edwardian socialists and Fabians as revolutionary heroes. The protagonist Trenchard awakes from his sleep, for example, in a house on "Henry Hyndman Avenue", while George Bernard Shaw is described as having received a "socialistic canonisation".<sup>84</sup> The book concludes with a vivid account of the collapse of the regime set in motion by a second invasion, this time by "the brown men" of the colonies. Conducting "an orgy of rape, plunder and murder", the invaders brutally atone "for all the wrongs, fancied and real, they had endured at the white man's hands".<sup>85</sup>

Among the most interesting of Newte's speculations are his ideas on the position of women in a socialist future. Having abolished traditional understandings of religion, morality, and the family, Trenchard is informed by his official instructor that the women of 2020 "sadly lack restraint". As Trenchard's host Dr Dale elaborates, "Socialism has unhappily removed women's safeguards and inducements to morality, with the result that as a whole...the sex run morally amok".<sup>86</sup> Women remain politically subordinate, unable to vote or to occupy positions of power, yet they are sexually liberated. Compelled to work unless living with a man, women of all ages dress provocatively in the hope of securing a lover. Rivals even engage in fights to the death over eligible men, watched with bloodlust by "the baleful, wolfish eyes of...onlookers".<sup>87</sup> Not all women, however, enjoy this level of personal freedom. The young female graduates of educational seminaries risk being sexually abused by senior

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<sup>82</sup> *The Master Beast*, p. 91.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154, 'The Master Beast, 1880-2020', *The Athenaeum* (4<sup>th</sup> January 1908), p. 10.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p.131. William Morris is also depicted in the early stages of *The Master Beast*, which suggests that Newte may have been trying to provide a counter-narrative to the utopian vision of *News from Nowhere* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1891).

<sup>85</sup> *The Master Beast*, p. 243.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 64 and 93.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

party officials. London's enormous lunatic asylum, moreover, is populated largely by distraught mothers, driven insane by having their children forcibly removed. This bleak interpretation of socialism in practice, and specifically the future of women in such a society, offers useful insight on Newte's views of both human nature and gender relations. In its review of *The Master Beast*, the *Hull Daily Mail* described human nature as "a very welter of contending forces and passions, which left to itself will result in anarchy and corruption":

Religion rules thought, and thought governs action, and in the absence of religion the "Master Beast" comes into play, and there follows a perfect carnival of evil, in which the bodily and mental powers built up by the careful habits of generations of honest or strenuous living "swizzle" down like a set of fireworks on bonfire night. It is the enthronement of the Abbot of Misrule...which the author...has in mind.<sup>88</sup>

For Newte, therefore, traditional concepts of religious morality were a crucial element of political stability. The movement for gender equality, among other forces of modernity, threaten to irrecoverably damage this delicate status quo.

Female sexual liberation in *The Master Beast*, then, is one facet of a violent, morally degraded society. One work that approaches this theme rather differently is *The Sex Triumphant* (1909). I. F. Clarke has identified this novel as one of a brief sequence of late-Victorian and Edwardian future fiction that tracked "the changing fortunes of the movement for women's rights".<sup>89</sup> Its author was the barrister, genealogist and novelist Arthur Charles Fox-Davies. A successful writer on heraldry and the aristocracy, Fox-Davies also spent a period editing the genealogical reference guide *Burke's Landed Gentry*.<sup>90</sup> Published in 1909, *The Sex Triumphant* follows the campaign of Violet Primrose and Lady Lena Cardington, upper class women whose gradual radicalisation takes them from the Primrose League through to a life of pro-suffrage protest. Appearing before the late-Edwardian

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<sup>88</sup> "The Master Beast" A Lurid Prophecy', *Hull Daily Mail* (28<sup>th</sup> December 1907), p. 6.

<sup>89</sup> Clarke, ed, *British Future Fiction*, vol. 5, *Women Triumphant*, p. 1.

<sup>90</sup> 'Mr A. C. Fox-Davies', *The Times*, (21<sup>st</sup> May 1928), p22, Fox-Davies, Arthur Charles, *Who Was Who*, online edn, (Oxford, 1997).

heights of suffragette militancy, the tactics of Primrose and Cardington vary considerably from those that would later achieve notoriety. Such tactics include deliberately bankrupting anti-suffrage tradesmen by persuading their wives to accumulate huge debts, and through the “League of Denial”, encouraging women not to engage in “marital relations” with their husbands.<sup>91</sup> These activities culminate in a suffragette march on Westminster (depicted in *Figure 4.1*) together with an unusual collection of mercenaries (or invaders), including “some three hundred rowdy Irishmen...[of] a certain Irish regiment”, a mixed force of “medical students and undergraduates”, and several hundred colliers down from Newcastle “each armed with an iron crowbar”. Promising the groups that “a glorious row” was in prospect, the men help erect barricades across Westminster Bridge and fight pitched battles with police in Parliament Square and Great George Street, allowing the suffragette leaders to march towards the House of Commons.<sup>92</sup>

The final scenes see Primrose and Cardington enter Parliament in the last stages of a debate concerning the controversial Women’s Suffrage Bill. They arrive in time to hear one MP vehemently arguing against their cause, asserting that “one of the privileges of the male sex [is] that we have, by our advantages of sex, the right of legislation”. Exiting the chamber following his speech, the member is seized by several masked men.

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<sup>91</sup> A. C. Fox Davies, *The Sex Triumphant* (1909), in Clarke, ed, *British Future Fiction, Vol. 5: Woman Triumphant*, p. 350.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 401-407.



Figure 4.1 - H. L. Shindler, '...three guns were in position', in A. C. Fox-Davies, *The Sex Triumphant*, I. F. Clarke, ed, *British Future Fiction, Vol. 5: Woman Triumphant* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2001), p. 409. H. L. Shindler was an illustrator who generally worked in children's literature. He also contributed "rather weak drawings" to the satirical Victorian periodical *Fun* (Houfe, *Dictionary of British Book Illustrations and Caricaturists*, p. 452). The four illustrations he provided for *The Sex Triumphant*, therefore, were not in his typical line of work. This illustration depicts Violet Davenport negotiating with Captain Molyneux, the officer of a Regiment of Guards barring her access to Great George Street. The crowd gathered behind the two figures is Davenport's bizarre force of mercenaries, including miners from Newcastle (holding aloft crowbars), mutinous Irish soldiers, and a small party of undergraduates and medical students. To the right of the picture are three Gatling guns manned by sympathetic "blue-jackets" aiming towards the Army lines. On the left is tram car, torn off its rails to operate as a barricade. Shindler's image nicely captures the tension of this unusual stand-off, as the crowd of flat capped workers, top-hatted students, and bonneted suffragettes appear on the edge of serious violence.

The subsequent events are shortly thereafter recounted to the Commons by a traumatised witness:

...we saw an operating table, three nurses, and two other women who I presume were surgeons. All the women were masked. The member for Cadster was held whilst the woman in black, whom I had seen at the door of the House, quietly reminded the honourable member of his words here. Chloroform was then administered...Need I say more of what we saw.

These bizarre events appear to represent “the writing on the wall” for the opponents of female enfranchisement. As the above witness explains to the outraged lower chamber, the argument that had been employed by the unfortunate member for Cadster “has simply been pushed to its logical conclusion”.<sup>93</sup> Appearing abruptly and rather incoherently in the work’s narrative, this brutal castration seems a strange inclusion for a pro-suffrage author.<sup>94</sup> Yet Fox Davies’s support of the suffrage campaign was seemingly party-political in nature, backing votes for women on the same basis as the post-1884 male franchise, thus cementing class differentials and increasing Conservative support. By extension, his use of emasculating imagery was arguably a comment on the social dangers of suffragette militancy. Indirectly empowering women through protest and political engagement, a measure of reform would address the “flagrant injustice of the denial of the vote”, allowing women to return to the passive feminine ideal. This certainly occurs in the case of Primrose, who pointedly does not apply to be placed on the Parliamentary register, admitting to her confused husband that she “didn’t care two straws for politics. If you can’t look after things of that kind for both of us, it’s a poor look-out.”<sup>95</sup>

The representation of the women’s suffrage movement in Edwardian invasion literature, then, can be split into two distinct forms. The first of these categories is formed by those narratives that deal with the issue in a strictly political sense. Such works oppose

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., pp. 421-3.

<sup>94</sup> In a publisher’s advert in *The Athenaeum* Fox-Davies’s “amusing farce” was given the extra description “Not written for the ‘young person’”, perhaps in recognition of its unusual plot twist *The Athenaeum*, 4240 (30<sup>th</sup> January 1909), p. 120.

<sup>95</sup> Fox Davies, *The Sex Triumphant*, in Clarke, ed, *British Future Fiction, Vol. 5: Woman Triumphant*, p. 428.

female enfranchisement, returning to Harrison's anti-suffrage framework, either out of instinctive conservatism or in opposition to specific elements of the pro-suffrage campaign. Some authors, often those associated with the compulsory service campaign, stressed the importance of women's emotional influence, arguing that enfranchisement was not the only source of political power. Other contributors were far more dismissive in tone, presenting the pro-suffrage movement as an irrelevant sideshow. In such narratives the threat of German invasion, or in the case of *Red England* the spectre of social revolution, are seen as far more pressing political issues than the question of women's rights. As one character in H. H. Munro's *When William Came* remarks in the aftermath of German occupation, "It makes one smile bitterly to think that a year or two ago we were seriously squabbling as to who should have votes".<sup>96</sup> Yet as is highlighted by *The Master Beast* and *The Sex Triumphant*, other writers present the pro-suffrage campaign as a serious threat to established British gender values. Of far greater concern than the franchise question for such authors is the emasculating influence of urban modernity, the dangers of feminine empowerment through political protest, and the fear that these subverted gender roles left Britain militarily vulnerable. The widespread opposition to the female suffrage campaign in invasion literature, therefore, was as much an introspective comment on Edwardian masculinity as it was an anxiety over feminine advance.

#### 4.4 - The Irish Question

Though the women's suffrage movement undoubtedly challenged many aspects of the Edwardian establishment, few historians have identified the campaign as the most damaging or dangerous crisis of the era. As Powell has argued, while suffragism and feminism "contributed to the impression of an Edwardian crisis; they were not its root cause".<sup>97</sup> By far the most serious of Edwardian Britain's domestic problems, Powell asserts, was the

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<sup>96</sup> Chesney and 'Saki', *The Battle of Dorking* and *When William Came*, p. 69.

<sup>97</sup> Powell, *The Edwardian Crisis*, p. 97.

controversy over Irish Home Rule, famously described by *The Times* as “one of the greatest crises in the history of the British race.”<sup>98</sup> This position is shared by many of the historians who have analysed the Edwardian political climate. In *The Making of Modern British Politics* Pugh described Ireland as “the most ominous aspect of the crisis”, arguing that it was the only element of Edwardian political upheaval that was truly anti-parliamentary in nature.<sup>99</sup> Similarly, David Brooks identified the Irish crisis in *The Age of Upheaval* as “the nadir of pre-war Liberalism”.<sup>100</sup> This position echoes the thesis of retreating liberalism championed by Dangerfield, who saw the late-Edwardian period as the years in which “the Liberal Party died the death”.<sup>101</sup> Yet the damage caused by the return of Home Rule as a political issue was not confined to the Liberal Party. The controversy was also instrumental in what one historian has labelled the Edwardian “crisis of Conservatism” or “the strange death of Tory England”.<sup>102</sup> The affair has also been interpreted, returning to Powell, as one part of “a more complex ‘crisis of nationalism’ confronting Britain’s imperial state, at home and abroad”.<sup>103</sup> Before analysing the representation of Ireland and Irish Home Rule in Edwardian invasion literature, then, it is worth further exploring the dimensions of this complex series of events.

Prior to the 1906 election, Joseph Chamberlain told an audience in Birmingham that the minority Liberal Government - formed after Arthur Balfour’s tactical resignation in December 1905 - was “essentially a Home Rule and Little Englander Government”.<sup>104</sup> Such fears were compounded by the landslide Liberal election victory, and burst into the open following the rejection of the so-called People’s Budget by the Tory-dominated House of Lords in November 1909. What had been a debate over the financing of social reform

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<sup>98</sup> ‘Grave News from Ireland’, *The Times* (27<sup>th</sup> January 1914), p. 9.

<sup>99</sup> M. Pugh, *The Making of Modern British Politics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993) pp. 109-112.

<sup>100</sup> Brooks, *The Age of Upheaval*, p. 150. Brooks does offer a positive judgement of Asquith’s ‘wait and see’ strategy in the crisis, highlighting that the passing of the Home Rule Bill in September 1914 was “thanks partly to the prime minister’s exploitation of the mood of wartime consensus”.

<sup>101</sup> Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, p. 68.

<sup>102</sup> Green, *The Crisis of Conservatism*, pp. 297-304, E. H. H. Green, ‘The Strange Death of Tory England’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 2.1 (1991), pp. 67-88.

<sup>103</sup> Powell, *The Edwardian Crisis*, p. 131, D. Powell, *Nationhood and Identity, The British State Since 1800* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2002), p. 121.

<sup>104</sup> Jenkins, *Mr Balfour’s Poodle*, p. 17.

became a fight for the constitutional high-ground. This fight was gladly harnessed by the Liberals as an argument for removing the Lords' veto.<sup>105</sup> Proposing this major reorganisation through the controversial Parliament Bill, described by the vocal opponent Lord Hugh Cecil as "unconstitutional to the point of insanity", the Liberals eventually won a narrow mandate for their reforms after the two General Elections of 1910, though this majority was dependent on the support of Labour and Irish Nationalist members.<sup>106</sup> This victory helped trigger a damaging schism among the Conservative Lords between 'hedgers' and 'ditchers', the former reluctant supporters of the Liberal proposals, and the latter opponents of any form of compromise. The threat posed by the 'Diehard' peers to the success of the legislation led to discussions between Asquith and the King over the theoretical mass-creation of Liberal peers, a proposal that if enacted had the potential to cause a major constitutional crisis. As it was, despite the threat of politically inactive 'backwoodsmen' swelling the ranks of the Diehards, the Parliament Bill was successfully ratified in late-August 1911.<sup>107</sup>

The significance of the furore surrounding the Parliament Act was that it represented "a prelude, some might have said a sideshow, to the more elemental conflict over Irish Home Rule".<sup>108</sup> The loss of the Lords' veto was viewed by many Tories as the product of a corrupt bargain between Liberalism and Irish Nationalism. With the principles of sound governance surrendered to party political advantage, the path now seemed free for a measure that

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<sup>105</sup> Accused by Lloyd George of "forcing revolution", the behaviour of the rebellious Lords has been much criticised. Emphasising the folly of rejecting the budget, Jenkins questions the political recklessness of such experienced figures as Balfour and the Tory leader in the upper chamber Lord Lansdowne, whose choices "greatly improved the electoral prospects of the Liberal Government" and "made the destruction of the Lords' veto inevitable", *Mr Balfour's Poodle*, p. 95. Peter Clarke, by contrast, argues that the rejection of the Liberal budget was "consistent with the calculated use of the Unionist majority in the Lords", thus meaning that the crisis grew out of "a premeditated, rational decision...not a suicidal impulse", 'The Edwardians and the Constitution', in D. Read, ed, *Edwardian England*, (London: Croom Helm, 1982), p. 46.

<sup>106</sup> W. S. Rodner, 'Conservatism, Resistance, and Lord Hugh Cecil', *History of Political Thought*, 9.3 (1988), p. 535.

<sup>107</sup> The term 'backwoodsman', explains G. D. Phillips, "originated in the rhetoric of an embattled Liberal government" during the constitutional crisis. It quickly became "a prime example of a received historical 'truth' repeated by many historians, but left uninvestigated". Arguing that such characterisation "has hindered the effort to understand the politics and society of the period in question", Phillips' research suggests that "the diehards, as a group, were actually more active politically than the rest of the House of Lords, taken as a group", 'The "Diehards" and the Myth of the "Backwoodsmen"', *Journal of British Studies*, 16.2 (1977), pp. 105-108. See also Phillips, *The Diehards*.

<sup>108</sup> Powell, *The Edwardian Crisis*, p. 67.



would, by Cecil's understanding, "weaken the unity of the United Kingdom" and "endanger the liberty of Irish loyalists and Ulster Protestants."<sup>109</sup> The aggressive Irish policy of the new Tory leader Andrew Bonar Law was tied to this principle of Liberal anti-constitutionalism. Stressing that Home Rule had no popular mandate, having never been placed before the electorate as part of a Liberal manifesto, Bonar Law considered the Constitution effectively suspended, at least until the government had restored a viable second chamber.<sup>110</sup> In an infamous speech at Blenheim Palace in 1912, Bonar Law described the Liberal Government as "a revolutionary committee which has seized power by fraud upon despotic power", and further asserted that he could "imagine no length of resistance to which Ulster can go in which I should not be prepared to support them".<sup>111</sup>

Such rhetoric was matched by Sir Edward Carson, leader of the Irish Unionists at Westminster and figure head of the anti-Home Rule movement. Lambasting Home Rule as "the most nefarious conspiracy that has ever been hatched against a free people", Carson warned his supporters that they should prepare "the morning Home Rule is passed, ourselves to become responsible for the government of the Protestant Province of Ulster."<sup>112</sup> By 1914, with gun-running rife among Ireland's competing paramilitary organisations, and political stalemate following cross-party negotiations at Buckingham Palace over the status of Ulster and the possibility of partition, the situation in Ireland was in serious danger of erupting into violence.<sup>113</sup> The fact that the British League for the Support of Ulster and the Union, headed by the prominent Diehard Lord Willoughby de Broke, could by February 1914

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<sup>109</sup> Rodner, 'Conservatism, Resistance and Lord Hugh Cecil', *History of Political Thought*, p. 535.

<sup>110</sup> J. Smith, *The Tories and Ireland, 1910-1914*, (Dublin: Irish Academy, 2000), pp. 42-3.

<sup>111</sup> Jackson, *Popular Opposition to Irish Home Rule in Edwardian Britain*, p. 20.

<sup>112</sup> Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, p. 81, Powell, *The Edwardian Crisis*, p. 145.

<sup>113</sup> For paramilitary activity in pre-1914 Ireland see M. Kelly, 'The Irish Volunteers: A Machiavellian Moment?', and T. Bowman, 'The Ulster Volunteer Force, 1910-1920: New Perspectives', both in D. G. Boyce and A. O'Day, eds, *The Ulster Crisis 1885-1921* (Basingstoke: Houndmills, 2006), pp. 64-85 and 247-258. For the Buckingham Palace Conference see A. T. Q. Stewart, *The Ulster Crisis, Resistance to Home Rule 1912-1914*, (Dundonald, 1997), pp. 229-230, and Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, pp. 394-399.

boast 15,000 volunteers “drilled, armed and ready to fight in Ulster” highlights the remarkable depths to which the situation had reached.<sup>114</sup>

Such context is important when trying to position Edwardian invasion literature in the political controversy surrounding Irish Home Rule. In the same way that the 1906 election was a watershed in the genre’s treatment of Liberalism, the Parliament Act provides an equally significant division in representations of Ireland. Works written after 1911 often treat the Irish situation far more directly than their predecessors, through fictional depictions of an independent Ireland, or of Ulster in military fervent. The narratives that precede this fault line usually consider Ireland in less immediate political terms, focusing on issues of cultural identity, of empire, and of broad concerns over future political sovereignty. Such representations at their most basic are informed by much older anti-Irish prejudice. Alternatively, as is touched upon in the second chapter, authors with federalist sympathies attempt to reconcile the ideas of Irish nationalism with the political reality of the Union. In comparing these pre and post-1911 strands, therefore, the declining political relationship between Ireland, Ulster, and Britain can be mapped quite effectively. These representations can, furthermore, be used to question the historiographical understanding of British attitudes to the Home Rule debate. Historians have traditionally argued that the crisis in Ulster generated little interest in mainland Britain outside of a small circle of the political elite.<sup>115</sup> Yet the regularity with which Ireland and the campaign for Home Rule appear as themes in contemporary invasion narratives does not bear out this assumption. Invasion narratives were arguably one part of what Daniel Jackson has called the “informal unionist *Gemeinschaft*” that emerged in the late-Edwardian period.<sup>116</sup> For the vast majority of

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<sup>114</sup> Smith, *The Tories and the People*, p. 175. De Broke even offered his limited military services to the Ulster Volunteer Force in March 1914, writing to the Commander with a description of his suitability. See Rodner, ‘Leaguers, Covenanters, Moderates: British Support for Ulster, 1913-1914’, *Eire-Ireland*, p. 84.

<sup>115</sup> Examples include S. Schama, *A History of Britain, Vol. 3: The Fate of Empire, 1776-2000* (London: BBC, 2002), p. 383, and A. Jackson, ‘British Ireland: what if Home Rule had been enacted in 1912’, in N. Ferguson, ed, *Virtual History: Alternatives and Counterfactuals* (London: Papermac, 1998), p. 188.

<sup>116</sup> Jackson, *Popular Opposition to Irish Home Rule in Edwardian Britain*, pp. 2-6. Jackson points to the popularity of pro-Ulster mass meetings in cities including Liverpool, Glasgow, and London as evidence for the existence of “a continued and intense interest in the cause and case of Unionist Ireland”. The mass

invasion literature authors, as will be explored below, the Irish Home Rule campaign was an extremely important political development.

In the early years of the Edwardian period the Irish question was in abeyance, a lull that had followed the defeat of Gladstone's Second Home Rule Bill in 1893, in addition to the death of Charles Stewart Parnell in 1891. The invasion narratives of this period, as such, are shaped by cautious faith in the security of the Anglo-Irish status quo. One illustrative example of this is *The Sack of London*. Published in 1901 in the early stages of a Unionist administration, the remote prospect of a third Home Rule Bill was of little concern to the anonymous author. Instead, Irish rebels play out an age-old English fear by rising in revolt after a French invasion of Britain. Portrayed as an opportunistic rebellion rather than a nationalist revolution, the author describes scenes of gratuitous violence, resulting in "the murder of every Englishman in cold blood by the frantic peasants".<sup>117</sup> As Britain faces down both French invasion and social revolution, Ireland slides into civil war and political stalemate. Unable to establish an effective national government, the British are eventually welcomed back after a promise of significant political and land reform. These measures prove extremely successful, so much so that the Government is praised for "solving" the Irish question through incorporating Ireland into the newly established "Federation of the British Empire". Fostering the hackneyed image of a backward, drunken, incapable population, the narrative concludes that, "when it came to discipline, the Irish peasants were not so keen for that long-promised Home Rule."<sup>118</sup> Revelling in the success of Britain's capacity for political

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demonstration in Liverpool on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1912, at which Sir Edward Carson spoke, saw, according to *The Times* "a torchlight procession of at least 100,000 men through miles of streets swarming with sympathisers" (1<sup>st</sup> October 1912), p. 6. A smaller but no less enthusiastic crowd had met Carson at Pier Head as his ship arrived from Belfast the previous morning, which the same correspondent had described as a stirring demonstration "of that spirit of determined resistance to Home Rule", *The Times* (30<sup>th</sup> September 1912), p. 10. Arguing against the importance of such demonstrations, Smith suggests that "For all the theatricals and fireworks, nothing had actually changed" in political terms, as "the bill had not been re-routed from its parliamentary course", *The Tories and Ireland*, p. 69.

<sup>117</sup> *The Sack of London*, p. 54.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

compromise, the narrator spares a thought for the now defunct Irish Republicans, who remain unable to forgive Westminster “for having deprived Ireland of her grievances”.<sup>119</sup>

Though *The Sack of London* is based on a crude understanding of Anglo-Irish relations, it highlights an important debate concerning Ireland’s peculiar status within the British Empire. Alvin Jackson has argued that for Ireland the Empire was “simultaneously a chain and a key: it was a source both of constraint and of liberation”. The Union provided great economic and social opportunity, but it did so at the expense of Irish political sovereignty. Too close to England to avoid this subordination, yet unsuited to the standard model of British colonial or dominion rule, Ireland was both “a half-hearted colony” and “a half-hearted component of the imperial metropolis”.<sup>120</sup> Echoing Jackson’s argument, Christine Kinealy describes Ireland’s status in the United Kingdom as a political paradox, whereby Ireland formed “part of the metropolitan core while simultaneously remaining a crucial component of the imperial project”.<sup>121</sup> Yet such existential dilemmas receive little sympathy from the authors of Edwardian invasion literature. The romance of Irish nationalism is regularly dismissed, as in *The Sack of London*, as a poor substitute for the quantifiable benefits of imperial integration. George Griffith adopts a similar line in *The World Peril of 1910* (1907) through the contrasting loyalties of the Castellan brothers. While Denis Castellan is a Lieutenant in the British Navy, his brother John is an inventor and militant Nationalist, who sells his blueprints for the ‘Flying Fish’, a submarine that can leap out of the water for prolonged periods, to the Germans. Griffith describes John Castellan as having two articles of political faith, “One was an unshakable belief in the possibility of Irish independence, and the other, which naturally followed from the first, was implacable hatred

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 116. An interesting counter-example from this period is Shan F. Bullock’s *The Red Leaguers* (London: Methuen and Co. 1903), a narrative that sympathetically describes a republican uprising in the north of Ireland. Plotting to overthrow the hated “Saxon” oppressor in a bloodless coup, the rebels imagine that “Ireland would be ours in a night”, p. 59. Unfortunately for them, the local Unionist population quickly become aware of their plans, leading to a series of bloody conflicts. The novel ends with reports of British landings on the east coast of Ireland, suggesting that the rebellion ultimately fails.

<sup>120</sup> A. Jackson, ‘Ireland, the Union, and the Empire, 1800-1960’, in K. Kenny, ed, *Ireland and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 136.

<sup>121</sup> C. Kinealy, ‘At Home with the Empire: the Example of Ireland’, in C. Hall, ed, *At Home with the Empire, Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 78.

of the Saxon oppressor". Incapable of accepting "the world-wide truism that the day of small states is past", John is "utterly unable to grasp the Imperial idea", and directs his nationalist anger at a country "whose power and wealth had saved Ireland from invasion for centuries".<sup>122</sup>

Other authors treated the cause of Irish nationalism in a far more optimistic manner (as is explored in more detail in chapter 2). In Le Queux's early success *The Great War in England* (1894), the threat of invasion allows Ireland to demonstrate its loyalty to Britain. On the news of a Franco-Russian invasion, volunteers from Ireland pour into Holyhead, Stranraer, and Liverpool, as "Nationalists and Unionists vied in their eagerness to demonstrate their love for the Empire".<sup>123</sup> Explaining this "spontaneous outburst of patriotism" that spanned the sectarian divide, Le Queux imagines an Irish population that, in spite of recent political discontent, were ready to come to terms in moments of broader crisis:

Whatever differences of political opinion had previously existed between them on the question of Home Rule were forgotten by the people in the face of the great danger which threatened the Empire to which they belonged.<sup>124</sup>

Summarising the novel as "a piece of disjointed and inconsequent silliness", the sarcasm of the *National Observer* in describing "when Ireland forgets Home Rule" is perhaps justifiably cruel.<sup>125</sup> That said, Le Queux's vision of war-time Irish reinforcements proved to be one of his more accurate predictions. On the outbreak of war in 1914, both the Nationalist and Unionist communities mobilised in high numbers. Unlike *The Great War in England*, however, these volunteers were driven by contrasting understandings of Ireland's imperial position. While for Unionists the war provided an opportunity to demonstrate their

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<sup>122</sup> G. Griffith, *The World Peril of 1910* (London: F. V. White and Co., 1907), p. 107.

<sup>123</sup> W. Le Queux, *The Great War in England in 1897* (London: Tower Publishing Co., 1894), p. 134.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 133-134.

<sup>125</sup> 'The Great War in England in 1897', *National Observer*, 13.304 (1894), p. 465.

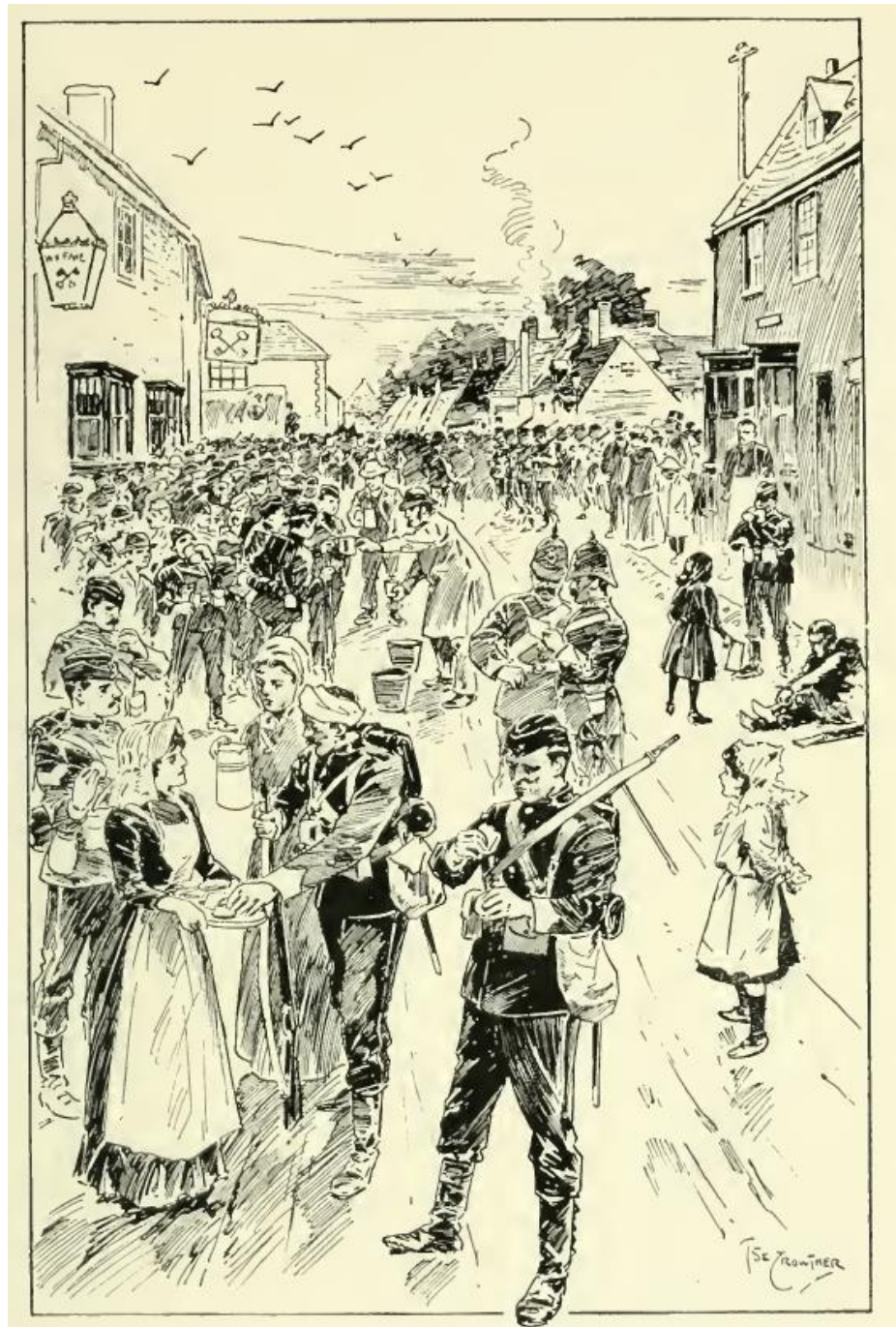


Figure 4.2 - T. S. Crowther, 'Irish Volunteers Halting in King's Cliffe, in W. Le Queux, *The Great War in England in 1897* (London: Tower Publishing Co., 1894), p. 136. Another of Crowther's illustrations from *The Great War in England*, this image depicts a body of Irish Volunteers resting in King's Cliffe, on their way towards Oundle and the frontline. Le Queux describes the force as a cross-section of Irish life who have put aside their political differences: "Sturdy fishermen from the rough shores of Donegal marched side by side with townsmen and artisans from Dublin, Belfast, and Limerick; sons of wealthy manufacturers in Antrim and Down bore arms with stalwart peasantry from Kerry and Tipperary". The illustration depicts these soldiers as a united body of men, gladly fraternising with their English hosts. It combines the rural idyll of "a typical English village" with a romantic, unproblematic vision of British unity in the face of invasion.

unwavering commitment to Britain, thus highlighting the folly of Irish self-government, John Redmond's National Volunteers aimed to prove that Home Rule was "fully compatible with loyalty to Crown and Empire".<sup>126</sup>

The Irish question was often paired in invasion literature with a series of other delicate socio-political issues. One such example, particularly in the early Edwardian years, was regular comparison with another colonial minority, namely the Boers. In the Russian council of war that begins C. A. Clarke's *Starved into Surrender*, the Irish are branded as "all talk, not like the Boers", before being dismissed as "too weak to do anything but send their sons to fight their conquerors battles". Yet Ireland proves invaluable as Britain slowly succumbs to starvation. Having been granted Home Rule, Irish ships manage to penetrate the Russian naval blockade and deliver much needed supplies.<sup>127</sup> A similar comparison is made in *The Unpardonable War* by James Barnes, a novel that sees an Anglo-American conflict encouraged by Washington in the hope of distracting American voters from growing internal political turmoil. This process is spearheaded by the unscrupulous newspaper editor Whalen, who describes himself as "the son of an Irish renegade who married the daughter of a Boer politician". Agreeing to print salacious, scaremongering stories with the aim of triggering war, Whalen leads a rebellious group of expatriates hoping to fashion Ireland into an anti-British *cause celebre*. Ireland itself, however, is not moved. As the narrator delightedly reports, "the loyalty of Ireland was predominant and overwhelming. The first blaze of insurrection had sunk to a merely dying ember".<sup>128</sup> Home Rule here is evidently seen as a non-starter, an American product bearing little relation to the British reality.

Another issue with which Home Rule was sometimes combined in these pre-1911 narratives was the threat of British political extremism, and the negative impact such developments could have on the parliamentary system. In *The Triumph of Socialism* (1908) by J. D. Mayne, the first sitting of the socialist-majority "Headless Parliament" is spoiled by

<sup>126</sup> R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Penguin, 1989), pp. 471-2.

<sup>127</sup> *Starved into Surrender*, pp. 30 and 205.

<sup>128</sup> J. Barnes, *The Unpardonable War* (New York: MacMillan, 1904), pp. 20 and 67.

the symbolic exit of the Irish Parliamentary Party. Explaining their decision to the House, the leader of the Irish members provides an early indication of the difficulties the new Government was going to face:

...the mode in which England was to be governed had no interest for him and his Party. He had risen to state, on the very earliest opportunity, that Ireland had resolved to declare itself an independent republic on Celtic principles...The honourable gentleman then bowed to the Speaker and left the House, followed by his entire party.<sup>129</sup>

An Anglo-Irish barrister and Professor of Law at Presidency College, Madras, Mayne offers a good example of Alvin Jackson's imperial 'liberation' model.<sup>130</sup> His image of Nationalist exodus from a socialist-dominated Westminster, furthermore, emphasises a common thematic link between pro-Union sentiment and anti-socialism. Another example of this theme occurs in the anonymous *Red England*. The narrative sees Ireland granted independence by the fledgling post-revolution socialist administration, rewarding Irish Nationalism for its role in the revolutionary struggle.<sup>131</sup> Faced with an unenviable choice "between the Green Flag and the Red", Ulster's Unionist majority choose a united Ireland over the "communistic fury" of Britain.<sup>132</sup>

Perhaps the strangest interpretation of British, Irish, and Ulster identities in this literature is *The North Sea Bubble* (1906). Its peculiar representations are to an extent the product of unusual literary form, as Ernest Oldmeadow's novel is part-parody and part-typical invasion narrative (see above). With the Government temporarily based in Galway after military defeat on the British mainland, German troops land at Belfast thanks to the indirect cooperation of the city's Unionist population. Understandably triggering anger and recrimination elsewhere in Ireland, one newspaper places Ulster's 'loyalty' under the microscope:

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<sup>129</sup> J. D. Mayne, *The Triumph of Socialism* (London: Swann Sonnenschein and Co., 1908), pp. 48-9.

<sup>130</sup> C. E. Buckland, *Dictionary of Indian Biography* (London: Swan Sonnenschein and Co., 1906), p. 280.

<sup>131</sup> *Red England*, p. 41.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.



Ulster's loyalty in 1911 is the same both in quality and in quantity as it has been any time since 1688. In other words, Ulster has never been loyal to anything or anyone save to the principles of Orange ascendancy and of Orange right to the biggest share of loaves and fishes.

As Ulster has long been the province where loyalty has been most loudly protested, delicate minds were prepared to find that it would be the province where loyalty was least practised. But it is as good for the Empire as it is shameful for Ulster to have the truth brought out fully into the daylight, and to have the great historic obstacle to the genuine Union of England and Ireland removed.<sup>133</sup>

In a complimentary review of *The North Sea Bubble*, the *Manchester Courier* picks up on this aspect of the narrative. Arguing that in such circumstances "Ulster would not have been disloyal", the reviewer concedes that "as the story is a medley of impossibilities such details are not important."<sup>134</sup> These details are, in fact, highly significant, as they echo an attitude that was later adopted by Dangerfield. Describing "the Orange population of Ulster" as "industrious but not loveable", he strikes a tone very similar to *The North Sea Bubble*:

[Ulster] had no love for England. It was quite alone; it owed no allegiance to anyone but itself and the grim God it had fashioned in its own likeness. England was a convenience, England existed to see that no Catholic Irish Parliament ever controlled affairs in Ulster...and the Conservative Party did not love it; but, looking round for a weapon with which to replace the Lords' veto, its eye lit upon...Ulster's bigotry.<sup>135</sup>

Though simplistic and reductionist, as is typical of *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, Dangerfield's belief in the contingent basis of Tory Unionism was not necessarily misplaced. Staunch Conservative commitment to the Union was a policy generally associated with the Tories while in Opposition. When in government, elements of the Party

<sup>133</sup> E. J. Oldmeadow, *The North Sea Bubble* (London: E. Grant Richards, 1906), pp. 171-172.

<sup>134</sup> 'New Novels', *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* (16<sup>th</sup> November 1906), p. 9.

<sup>135</sup> Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, pp. 73-4.

often displayed a greater level of flexibility, or at least a willingness to discuss the political future of Ireland. This trend is highlighted in particular by the emergence of the Irish Reform Association in 1904, a body that promoted cross-party dialogue on the issue of devolution, and precipitated a crisis that all but cost the then Irish Secretary George Wyndham his political career.<sup>136</sup> This form of Unionist flexibility characterises *The North Sea Bubble*, a work in which the British political establishment, Tory and Liberal alike, is converted to Irish Home Rule en masse. This conversion begins in a highly circumstantial fashion, as the product of a Government in exile ironically exercising power from Ireland. Yet the Leader of the House later describes his conversion as “hearty and complete”, having “seen Irishmen, and consequently the Irish question, in a new light”.<sup>137</sup> Introducing and fast-tracking a Home Rule Bill, the members rejoice in the establishment of “a Union under One Crown”, replacing the previous system of “a Union under One Parliament.”<sup>138</sup> Such an idealistic federal solution may have appealed to Wyndham and Oldmeadow, but it remained an unpopular political position throughout the Edwardian period. For hard-line British and Irish Unionists such as the Tory chief whip Sir Alexander Acland-Hood, federalism represented “a specious trap”, designed to force through Home Rule under the guise of democratic, devolutionary reform.<sup>139</sup>

Prior to 1911, then, the representation of Ireland and Home Rule in Edwardian invasion literature is surprisingly varied. There are examples of base anti-Irish prejudice, fears over the influence of pro-Home Rule sentiment in the United States, and even visions of opportunistic disloyalty in Ulster. In turn, the Irish question is linked with other social and political problems, such as comparable colonial independence movements and the threat of internal political extremism. Invasion narratives also provided a forum through which the complex cultural and political relationship between Ireland and Britain could be debated.

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<sup>136</sup> Smith, *The Tories and Ireland, 1910-1914*, pp. 18-19. Wyndham would re-emerge as leader of the Diehards in the House of Commons during the constitutional crisis.

<sup>137</sup> *The North Sea Bubble*, pp. 153-154.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 157.

<sup>139</sup> ‘The Political Situation’, *The Times* (21<sup>st</sup> October 1910), p. 10.

While some works are shaped by an unshakable authorial faith in existing conditions and institutions, several examples of this literature display progressive, federalist attitudes concerning the political future of Ireland. After 1911, however, these variations vanish, and are replaced by uncompromising opposition to the Home Rule movement. This shift in representation, which responded to the general hardening of political positions that followed the Parliament Act controversy, is well-captured by the 1912 narrative *The Peril of Pines Place*. “Unless we are mistaken”, as Blyth’s protagonist Paul Vansittart warns, “we have to fight a conspiracy against the constitution”.<sup>140</sup> For such authors as Blyth Irish Home Rule was no longer an abstract issue, it was a real and revolutionary challenge to the British political system. By closely analysing two post-1911 narratives, *Under Home Rule* by William Palmer and *The North Afire* by Wilfred Newton, this shift can be mapped in greater detail, and grounded in the increasingly serious political challenges of the late-Edwardian years.

Published in 1912, *Under Home Rule* is a lurid near-future narrative that describes the inherent dangers of granting Ireland political independence. The tone is set on the book’s front cover, as three graphic statements are printed asserting that “Home Rule means Roman ascendancy”, “Home Rule means civil war”, and “Home Rule will break the Empire”.<sup>141</sup> Palmer’s novel, as was discussed at length in the second chapter, is strongly anti-Catholic in nature. Fearing that an independent Ireland would be dominated by the priesthood, *Under Home Rule* imagines a plot to infiltrate Westminster with pro-Irish members, as a precursor to military invasion and the re-establishment of the Catholic Church in Britain. As Ireland’s theocratic Cardinal informs his sceptical Prime Minister:

A sudden blow, delivered at the right moment, might, and probably would, make England ours. It is time that she was dragged from her boastful eminence and made to bite the

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<sup>140</sup> *Peril of Pines Place*, p. 113.

<sup>141</sup> W. Palmer, *Under Home Rule. A Novel* (London: Baines and Scarsbrook, 1912).

dust...the Church could summon a vast army to Ireland from all parts of the world, and our accumulated funds would be more than sufficient to support it.<sup>142</sup>

This improbable scheme was mocked by *The Athenaeum*, where a reviewer sarcastically admitted he had been unaware that “such seductive villainy underlay the seeming guilelessness of the Nationalists”.<sup>143</sup> When these plans are made public in Britain, the Government rescinds the Home Rule Act, establishes a naval blockade around Ireland, and eventually lands troops to restore British control. With the Union re-established, Ireland “became a prosperous and happy country...[and] thrived as England thrived.”<sup>144</sup>

Though this conspiracy against Britain is ultimately foiled, the catholicisation of Ulster is explored in vivid detail. This transition is brutally enforced by the inquisitorial Ecclesiastical Court, described by the narrator as “one of the most deadly weapons wielded by the Government against the people’s liberty”. Ostensibly established “to deal with purely religious matters”, the court is used in practice to crush all forms of opposition.<sup>145</sup> Visiting a Belfast courthouse in her role as a double-agent, Palmer’s heroine Norah Mackay bears witness to the trial of a young man accused of “denouncing the Government and the Church”. Having been witnessed criticising England “for rendering it possible for loyal subjects of the King to be intimidated and trodden under foot by the enemies of Ireland”, the defendant passionately justifies his actions:

This trial is a shame trial, and this charge is as false as it is wicked...I blame the people of an enlightened country, who, knowing of what you were capable in the past and what depths you would descend to for the sake of power and money in the present, yet handed over free born men and women...bound and gagged for you to trample under your feet...[I] leave my blood at

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>143</sup> ‘List of New Books’, *The Athenaeum*, 4397 (3rd February 1912), pp. 129-30.

<sup>144</sup> *Under Home Rule*, p. 168.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., pp. 62.

the doors of those who shirked their responsibility, and, under the plea of settling this country, put a halter round the necks of honest men and destroyed their children.<sup>146</sup>

This bleak vision may appear sensationalist, but it represented a genuine contemporary anxiety over “the strong possibility of religious intolerance” in an independent Irish state. As one writer argued the following year in the *Westminster Review*, “the ruling majority in an Irish Parliament would possess every temptation to use their power in oppressing the people of Ulster.”<sup>147</sup> The implausible invasion threat imagined in *Under Home Rule* is thus clearly vehicular in nature, providing the author with a popular literary format through which he promoted an anti-Home Rule agenda.

While *Under Home Rule* dealt with the speculative threat of religious intolerance, *The North Afire* by Wilfred Newton responded directly to a specific political and military controversy, the Curragh Incident of March 1914. Often erroneously referred to as the “Curragh Mutiny”, Ian Beckett has described the affair as “one of the very few occasions in modern times when the British army could be said openly to be challenging civil supremacy over the military in peacetime”.<sup>148</sup> The incident had its origins in the widespread understanding that, should Carson’s Ulster Loyalists successfully establish a provisional Government following the passing of a Home Rule Bill, the British military would be called upon to force the Bill through. Many observers suspected, due to the largely Unionist sympathies of the Officer corps, that Army loyalty “might well be strained beyond endurance”.<sup>149</sup> In the wake of governmental orders to increase troop numbers in Belfast, widespread officer discontent emerged at the prospect of leading coercive measures against

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid., pp. 63-65.

<sup>147</sup> H. Douglas Gregory, ‘The Ethics of Armed Resistance’, *Westminster Review*, 180.1 (1913), p. 2.

<sup>148</sup> The term ‘mutiny’ is erroneous because ultimately no orders were disobeyed during the affair, I. Beckett, ed, *The Army and the Curragh Incident 1914* (London: Bodley Head, 1986), p. 1. The *Manchester Guardian* aptly described the incident as a “contingent mutiny”, (24<sup>th</sup> March 1914), p. 8.

<sup>149</sup> R. N. W. Blake, *The Unknown Prime Minister* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1955), p. 173. Prior to the events at the Curragh in March, leading Unionists including Bonar Law were contemplating amending the annual Army Act in the Lords which would effectively suspend military discipline. The tactics were, says Blake, “reckless in the extreme, and it is an astonishing revelation of the extent to which the Irish problem had dazzled, almost blinded, the leading politicians of the Conservative Party, that they should have even considered such a perilous course”, pp. 173-4.

Ulster. This led the Commander in Chief in Ireland Sir Arthur Paget to secure verbal concession from the War Office that, should officers feel unable to obey orders but unwilling to accept dismissal, they could “disappear” for the duration of such operations.<sup>150</sup> In the event, sixty officers of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Cavalry Brigade then at the Curragh army base resigned their commissions. Initially refusing to accept these resignations, the War Secretary Jack Seely further erred by promising in writing that the army would never be harnessed to force through Home Rule in Ulster, a concession the Cabinet quickly cancelled, leading to numerous ministerial resignations.<sup>151</sup> Several days after the initial Officer resignations, the *Daily Mirror* feared civil war was approaching, asserting that “The menacing shadow of strife hangs over the country”.<sup>152</sup> Though this febrile atmosphere had considerably calmed by the summer, the lack of an effectively functioning Army remained an unresolved issue. Indeed, on 4<sup>th</sup> July, exactly a month before the declaration of war on Germany, the Army Council acknowledged that a coercive military operation in Ulster was no longer practical.<sup>153</sup>

Published less than two months later in May 1914, Newton’s short story explores the paradoxical issues at the root of the Curragh controversy. Based on the nightmare scenario of the British Army having to force Ulster into an independent Ireland, *The North Afire* considers the dilemmas of duty, loyalty, and national identity faced both by soldiers and by the rebellious Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF). The lead character Comyns Loudoun is an Army officer stationed in the north of Ireland. On the eve of Home Rule being passed his future brother-in-law and fellow officer Captain Stackpoole has resigned his commission, intending to help establish a Loyalist provisional Government. As Loudoun explains to his fiancée April, “I had the same problem to face as Stackpoole...The choice of resignation...or

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<sup>150</sup> Powell, *The Edwardian Crisis*, p. 150.

<sup>151</sup> Searle, *A New England?*, pp. 431-2.

<sup>152</sup> ‘Seventy Cavalry Officers at Irish Camp Resign’, *Daily Mirror* (23<sup>rd</sup> March 1914), p. 3.

<sup>153</sup> Beckett, ed, *The Army and the Curragh Incident 1914*, p. 26. See also ‘A Memorandum by the Military Members of the Army Council on the Military Situation in Ireland’ (Document 224), in *Ibid.*, pp. 379-380.

remaining was given to me...Stackpoole has made his choice...I made mine".<sup>154</sup> Difficult though the decision was, for Loudoun it was not a matter of choice:

To me a soldier is a soldier. Nothing else; not a politician, not a person with any views at all. Just a soldier, doing the duty he has sworn to do, and not asking questions about it...Duty is unpleasant nearly always. Sometimes – this is an occasion – it is almost ghastly. But there it is...When the Commanding Officer gave us the choice, service, even against our best friends here in Ulster, or resigning, there was only one choice for me.<sup>155</sup>

Yet as April reminds Loudoun, duty is not always so straightforward, "For us duty means the Union...All our ideals are your ideals, not Dublin ideals, or Cork ideals but yours – English. And yet you want to cast us off."<sup>156</sup> Newton's narrative reflects a contemporary anger, highlighted by the farcical events at the Curragh, that the Army had become a political tool. In one of his last speeches in the Lords, Lord Roberts decried the dilemma facing soldiers between enforcing legal authority and fulfilling their sense of duty, and asserted that the Army "should be allowed to disappear from the political arena, into which it has been thrust."<sup>157</sup> For Roberts, as for Newton, poor governance had forced officers to make extremely difficult and entirely inappropriate judgement calls.

As with his novel *War* published earlier that year, Newton's treatment of the Curragh Incident was generally met with critical acclaim. "We are not so much interested", recorded *The Athenaeum*, "in the subtitle of this book, 'A Picture of What May Be', as in the author's perception of what is", commending Newton for his stinging critique of "parliamentary loquacity".<sup>158</sup> This unusual status between speculation and contemporary political commentary was also recognised by the *Manchester Courier*. In a column entitled "The

<sup>154</sup> W. D. Newton, *The North Afire* (London: Methuen and Co., 1914), p. 8.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>157</sup> *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)* (House of Lords), 5<sup>th</sup> ser., 60, cols. 775-778 (30<sup>th</sup> March 1914). See also R. J. Q. Adams, 'Field Marshall Earl Roberts: Army and Empire', in J. A. Thompson and A. Mejia, eds, *Edwardian Conservatism, Five Studies in Adaptation* (London: Croom Helm, 1988), p. 71.

<sup>158</sup> 'The North Afire', *The Athenaeum*, 4517 (23rd May 1914), p. 740.

North Afire” – A Warning or A Prophecy?’, one reviewer praised Newton for trying to achieve the impossible; a sense of political perspective:

By the dramatic events at the Curragh or by some intervention, the nature of which will not be disclosed till, someday when the storm is abated and passions are stilled, the secret political history of 1914 will come at last to be written, the blaze was averted – or was it merely postponed? Time alone can give the answer.<sup>159</sup>

In a similar vein, *The Sunday Times* described the work as a warning of what might occur in Ulster “in circumstances which, it may sincerely be hoped, the dispensers of our national destiny may find the good wit to render impossible.”<sup>160</sup> *The North Afire*, then, did not appear wildly sensational to its late-Edwardian audience. Instead, it was seen as an accurate assessment of a period in which “peace and war hangs in the balance”.<sup>161</sup>

It is important to note, however, that *The North Afire* was not well received in Ulster. A review in the *Irish Independent* on 18<sup>th</sup> May accused Newton of “unpardonable ignorance”, highlighted by a poor grasp of the Armagh accent, his use of the Gaelic *Padraic* for a staunchly Orange character, and his ill-conceived “jibes at a revered order of Catholic priests”.<sup>162</sup> Responding to this review the following week in a letter to the editor, Newton argued such ‘jibes’ were clearly jocular, and accused the reviewer of being “that startling thing, an Irishman without a sense of humour.”<sup>163</sup> This barbed remark further inflamed an already acrimonious exchange. What had particularly irked the paper’s correspondent was Newton’s treatment of the Ulster Volunteer Force, who, barely distinguishable in his narrative from the ‘Orange Order’, fire the first shot. As Loudoun is told by a passer-by on the outbreak of rioting, the Master of the local Orange Lodge Marnus Moore had been killed. “The Constabulary moved to enforce the might av the law. It was Marnus himsilf fired his

<sup>159</sup> ‘When War Came to Ulster, “The North Afire” – A Warning or a Prophecy?’, *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* (16<sup>th</sup> May 1914), p. 6.

<sup>160</sup> ‘Recent Fiction’, *The Sunday Times* (24<sup>th</sup> May 1914), p. 8.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> ‘Civil War in Fiction’, *Irish Independent* (18<sup>th</sup> May 1914), p. 6.

<sup>163</sup> ‘The North Afire’, *Irish Independent* (25<sup>th</sup> May 1914), p. 7.



gun first, but it was thim that provoked him sore...All the bhoys are out, an' the North's afire."<sup>164</sup> Writing again in the *Irish Independent* on 1<sup>st</sup> June, the same correspondent referred to a review in the *Northern Whig*, in which Newton was accused of underestimating "the grave sense of discipline prevailing amongst the loyalist forces". Such men were defended as well-drilled paramilitaries, not irrational, unorganised rioters.<sup>165</sup> "Next time Mr Douglas Newton comes over here to 'write up' our affairs" finished the piece, "let him, at least, set his watch to Irish time".<sup>166</sup> Though this may have been an innocuous flurry of letters, this exchange highlights an important gap in perception between British and Irish reviewers. While for the former *The North Afire* was a telling, well-executed portrayal of the dangers of Army involvement in Ulster, for the latter it grossly misrepresented the character of Ulster loyalism.

In analysing the treatment of the Irish Home Rule movement in Edwardian invasion literature, this section has tried to highlight two key arguments. Firstly, by identifying the important influence of the Parliament Act controversy in shaping authorial attitudes towards Home Rule, invasion narratives have been presented as a way of tracking the increasing severity of this political crisis. While works such as *The Sack of London* (1901), *The Unpardonable War* (1905) and *The North Sea Bubble* (1906) approach the issue with a degree of political detachment, the narratives of the late-Edwardian years treat Home Rule in a far more direct manner, and display far greater levels of anxiety. Illustrating the thematic importance of domestic political upheaval in the invasion genre, such narratives are often more heavily shaped by the Irish question than by the abstract threat of invasion. In turn, by highlighting the regular appearance of Irish political themes within Edwardian invasion literature, this section has countered the idea that Irish Home Rule generated little popular interest in mainland Britain. While the authors of invasion literature were undoubtedly drawn from a narrow social class, their narratives brought the Home Rule debate to a large popular

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<sup>164</sup> *The North Afire*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>165</sup> 'Reviewer answers author', *Irish Independent* (1<sup>st</sup> June 1914), p. 2.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

audience, helping to spread what Daniel Jackson's has termed the "informal unionist Gemeinschaft". Unlike the genre's representation of other internal political flashpoints, however, the influence of 'Radical Right' ideology on the treatment of Ireland is difficult to ascertain. This arguably reflects a broader drift towards political extremism over the course of the Irish crisis. As is illustrated by Bonar Law's combative rhetoric at Blenheim Palace, the Home Rule debate saw 'Radical Right' ideas move from the periphery to the centre of Conservatism.<sup>167</sup> Sensationalist visions of religious persecution and civil war were not reflecting radical ideas in this instance, they were instead echoing Conservative Party policy.

#### 4.5 - The Red Hand of Ruin

The final element of Dangerfield's tripartite of social upheaval was the "Workers' Rebellion". Loosely referring to an increasingly militant pattern of disputes in Edwardian industrial relations, Dangerfield described the affair as "such an assault upon Liberalism as put the two previous rebellions completely in the shade".<sup>168</sup> Though most subsequent studies have identified the Irish crisis as the most dangerous of the Edwardian upheavals, other historians have defended this analysis. The social historian Paul Thompson, for example, has highlighted the rising level of labour unrest as "the most serious element in the pre-war crisis", arguing that the late-Edwardian increase in strike action "undoubtedly represented a heightening of working-class consciousness".<sup>169</sup> For the majority of invasion literature authors this developing class consciousness was the most significant internal political threat, as such changes appeared to represent a precursor to inevitable class conflict. As such, Edwardian invasion narratives often include visions of radicalised workers, political violence, and socialist revolution. This analysis will move beyond the literature's fusion of Liberalism and political radicalism discussed in the opening section of this chapter. By contextualising

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<sup>167</sup> Rodner, 'Leaguers, Covenanters, Moderates: British Support for Ulster, 1913-1914, *Eire-Ireland*, pp. 68-69.

<sup>168</sup> Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, p. 207.

<sup>169</sup> P. Thompson, *The Edwardians: The Remaking of British Society*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 241-245.

these representations in the historiography of Edwardian industrial upheaval, the fear of revolution will be identified as an extremely important thematic element of the invasion genre. This representation of class conflict, furthermore, offers a clear contrast to the literature's treatment of working class patriotism. While the latter is informed by a traditional and paternalistic conservatism (as is explored in the second chapter), it will be argued that the former emphasises the ever-present influence of 'Radical-Right' ideology on the authors of Edwardian invasion narratives.

Before engaging with the many examples of this revolution theme within invasion literature, it is worth establishing whether such fears were based in a genuine political reality. The late-Edwardian period undoubtedly saw a major rise in industrial unrest. This trend can be traced back as far as 1901 to the infamous Taff Vale Case. Arising from a bitter dispute between the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants and the Taff Vale Railway Company, the Lords' judgment of 1901 asserted that unions were liable to cover any loss of profits caused by strike action, to the outrage of the wider trade union movement. Though the decision was effectively reversed by the 1906 Trade Disputes Act, the unpopularity of the initial judgement proved a catalyst for the rapid expansion of working class unionisation.<sup>170</sup> From 900,000 in 1906, affiliated trade union membership had risen to 1.5 million by 1914. Between 1907 and the outbreak of war, moreover, over seventy million working days had been lost to strike action.<sup>171</sup> With the formation of the "Triple Alliance", an amalgamation of miners, railwaymen, and transport workers' unions, the threat of a general strike left Britain facing a damaging collapse in industrial relations.<sup>172</sup> This gradual increase in industrial militancy was paralleled by the establishment of Labour as a significant parliamentary force.<sup>173</sup> Taken together these two developments could certainly appear to represent a challenge to the existing political order. Many Edwardians had begun to expect, as *The*

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<sup>170</sup> Read, *Edwardian England*, pp. 196-7. See also N. McCord, 'Taff Vale Revisited', *History*, 78.253 (1993), pp. 243-260.

<sup>171</sup> H. Pelling, *Popular Politics and Society in late Victorian Britain* (London: MacMillan, 1968), pp. 117 and 149.

<sup>172</sup> H. Pelling, *A History of British Trade Unionism*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1992), p. 141.

<sup>173</sup> For the evolution of the early Labour Party see J. Callaghan, 'The Edwardian Crisis: The Survival of Liberal England and the Rise of a Labour Identity', *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*, 33 (2012), pp. 1-24.

*Times* gloomily reported in 1912, “a conflict between Labour and Capital...upon a scale as has never occurred before”.<sup>174</sup>

Highly organised and universally literate, the British working class certainly appeared to have revolutionary potential. And had the labour unrest been met “by unbending coercion and resistance”, Thompson suggests that it “could well have proved a revolutionary movement”. Yet the movement never reached this level of radicalisation during the Edwardian period. This was arguably because British industrial militancy “was never effectively carried over into political consciousness”.<sup>175</sup> While many workers had developed political attitudes based largely on class interest, it was a form of class consciousness that, in McKibbin’s words, was “defensive rather than aggressive.” Such men joined unions and partook in industrial action through a desire for improved working and living conditions, not as an expression of a revolutionary ideology. What radical campaigns there were, such as the syndicalism of the Liverpool docks and the South Wales collieries, were vocal but ultimately unsuccessful minorities.<sup>176</sup> The growth of the Labour Party, in turn, demonstrated the strength of reformism in domestic socialist circles. Far from calling for the overthrow of the British state, Labour’s success was a vote of confidence in the parliamentary system and its ability to meet the changing needs of a mass electorate. The legacy of the Edwardian labour unrest, then, was not “syndacalst fury” or revolutionary socialism, but a working class commitment to unionisation and parliamentarianism.<sup>177</sup>

The common theme of revolution in Edwardian invasion literature, therefore, saw rational fears of industrial unrest evolve into irrational visions of political chaos and social collapse. One illustrative example of this process is *The Tyranny* by James Blyth. Published in 1907, the narrative follows the rise of Lewis Ferrer, a successful entrepreneur

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<sup>174</sup> ‘The Industrial Situation’, *The Times* (6<sup>th</sup> January 1912), p. 7.

<sup>175</sup> Thompson, *The Edwardians*, pp. 241-248.

<sup>176</sup> R. McKibbin, ‘Why was there no Marxism in Great Britain?’, *English Historical Review*, 99.391 (1984), p. 305. See also Pelling, *Popular Politics and Society in Late Victorian Britain*, p. 160.

<sup>177</sup> D. Dean, ‘The Character of the Early Labour Party, 1900-14’, in A. O’Day, ed, *The Edwardian Age: Conflict and Stability, 1900-1914* (London: MacMillan, 1979), p. 112. See also N. Redfern, *Class or Nation: Communists, Imperialism, and Two World Wars* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2005), pp. 20-25.

and inventor, who develops a form of mind control. Referred to as “the power”, his discovery allows him to “transform a cultured man to an uneducated labourer, or vice versa”, all the while maintaining total control over their actions.<sup>178</sup> Establishing “Unemployment Limited”, an organisation offering work to London’s unemployed masses at newly-built rural working settlements, Ferrer places thousands of workers under his power and slowly becomes the eponymous tyrant. “In two years time”, he boasts, “I shall be the master of the nation – the dictator of British trade, the real sovereign of the realm”.<sup>179</sup> Ferrer’s economic power and psychological influence becomes so great that the invasion of the novel, an opportunistic plot from Germany sensing Britain’s ongoing social upheaval, is a comical non-starter. Blockading the German fleet and transports at Kiel with his own private navy, and capturing the “blustering vapourer” Kaiser Wilhelm, the narrator delightedly reports that, through Ferrer, “England had for once got in the first blow”.<sup>180</sup> His victory, however, is short-lived. Unable to control an increasing level of open dissent, Ferrer is killed by a rebellious mob “under the walls of the principal settlement on which he had based so much”.<sup>181</sup>

While Blyth’s vision of social upheaval in *The Tyranny* is largely the product of unchecked megalomania, the author is also highly critical of trade unionism. The narrative describes an emotionally-charged meeting between Ferrer and a deputation of senior union members, who are concerned by the impact of his working settlements on broader employment patterns. Asking to be provided with details about the working conditions of Ferrer’s many employees, the tyrant angrily refuses their request:

You men who pretend to organise the labour market of this country have done more harm to the labouring man than any other person or condition. You, by your unreasonable demands and strikes, have driven half the trade out of the country, whither it will never return unless

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<sup>178</sup> *The Tyranny*, p. 33.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 216-227

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 262.

some strong measure be taken which will oust you from your power. That measure I am prepared to take, in spite of you.<sup>182</sup>

Refusing to employ unionised workers at his settlements, the success of Unemployment Limited proves “worse than any Taff Vale decision” for the British trade union movement. Their situation hardly improves after the death of Ferrer. With parliamentary reforms introduced stipulating that “no member of Parliament may receive any pecuniary aid from any source but the state”, the Labour presence in the Commons ceases to exist. Yet this development is welcomed by Britain’s beleaguered working populace, having recognised “that the very last person capable of seeing what the working-class want is a working man”.<sup>183</sup> For all his excesses and abuses of power, then, Ferrer is heralded by Blyth for smashing the power of the unions. Rightly attacking “trade crimes which were worse than murder”, and “trade associations which were worse than the Mafia”, Blyth presents Ferrer’s legacy as a society where industrial relations sit on a much safer footing.<sup>184</sup>

As with all of Blyth’s invasion narratives, *The Tyranny* is shaped by a particularly extreme treatment of its chosen themes. Nonetheless, several other examples of invasion literature offer similarly negative representations of Edwardian trade unionism. In *The Boy Galloper*, one of the young protagonists Leonard Smith witnesses a train driver refusing to redirect his train on military orders following German landings in Sussex. Asserting that he was “not agoin’ to run any unnecessary risks”, the striking railwaymen appears the epitome of the self-interested, unionised worker. Quickly losing his patience, the commanding officer Captain Appleby informs the driver of his narrowing options, “‘you *are* going to drive this engine back to London or---!’ and the staff officer’s hand stole meaningly towards his revolver”. With the train on the way back to King’s Cross, Appleby warns a gathering crowd that “the man who now refuses to do what he is ordered for the public good is a traitor, and

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., p. 274.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., p. 267.

will be treated as such".<sup>185</sup> Headon Hill's *Seaward for the Foe*, a collection of ten short "incidents in a naval war", also considers the effect of industrial action on an imaginary war effort.<sup>186</sup> In the last of these incidents, entitled 'How Ella Rhys stopped the Coal Strike', Britain's Channel Fleet is lying off Cardiff "paralysed and helpless for want of coal". The narrative focuses on one colliery where two local union leaders, Morgan and Llewellyn, clash over the best course of action. While the former champions the importance of maintaining the strike, Llewellyn calls for "the resumption of work on the score of patriotism".<sup>187</sup> As this personal conflict increases in acrimony, Morgan is revealed to be a French agent, paid handsomely "to keep the strike going as long as possible". Such foreign intrigue is a natural hazard of war, the narrator concludes, for a nation whose populace is "left free to choose between their country's weal and what they may deem their own advantage".<sup>188</sup> Trade unionism is thus not simply a domestic political problem, it is a major risk to national security.<sup>189</sup>

It should be noted that other authors saw trade unionism as a potential bulwark against class interest and revolutionary socialism. One such example is *The Triumph of Socialism* by J. D. Mayne. Published in 1908, the narrative is set in the near-future of 1912 in which "the Socialists" have won a landslide general election victory. Initially celebrated as "a new era of liberty and equality", within six months the new Government has driven Britain to the point of ruin.<sup>190</sup> Cuts to Army and Navy budgets threaten imperial security, agricultural collectivisation proves a lengthy, expensive, and highly unpopular process, and the nationalisation of industry triggers widespread strike action. This abject failure is presented

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<sup>185</sup> L. James, *The Boy Galloper* (Edinburgh and London: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1903), pp. 166-167.

<sup>186</sup> 'Seaward for the Foe', *Saturday Review*, 95.2487 (27<sup>th</sup> June 1903), p. 817.

<sup>187</sup> H. Hill, pseud., *Seaward for the Foe* (London: Ward, Lock and Co., 1903), pp. 180-181.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 195.

<sup>189</sup> This direct link between British workers and foreign invasion has similarities with the plot of *The Peril of Pines Place* (see above). Another work that engages with this idea is Colonel L. A. Hale's pamphlet *The Horrors of War in Great Britain* (London: Love and Malcolmson, 1910). A non-fictional narrative that describes, in the words of its subtitle, *the miseries and sufferings of all non-fighters...were an invader in our island*, Hale records his concern "at the calmness and the indifference" in which the threat of invasion "is sometimes spoken of" in Edwardian Britain. Moreover, Hale asserts he has been told "on good authority" that a section of the working class are "so dissatisfied with their present lot, that they view a possible invasion almost with content", p. 10.

<sup>190</sup> *The Triumph of Socialism*, p. 3.

as wholly inevitable throughout the work. The King, who refuses to abdicate and instead leaves Britain to establish his court in Delhi, assures the new Prime Minister that he will return “when your mad experiment has ended in ruin – and mark you, end in ruin it will”. Speaking at the first session of the new Parliament, the leader of the Opposition similarly dismisses socialism as “a very beautiful dream...[that] corresponds to nothing in real life.”<sup>191</sup> This criticism was echoed by a review in the *Daily Mail*. Praising Mayne’s work as “a very pertinent reflection on the practical effect of Socialist proposals”, the reviewer concludes that it is “difficult to make water run up a hill”.<sup>192</sup> The narrative culminates in a Conservative coup d’état, following the occupation of Guernsey by Germany, and the symbolic return of the monarch from self-imposed exile. Britain’s electorate, moreover, has realised through first-hand experience the dreadful follies of socialism in practice (as highlighted by *Figure 4.3*).

Styled as a series of newspaper extracts, one chapter takes the form of an interview with a prominent member of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers. Expressing his belief that “we trades unionists made a great mistake in throwing in our lot with the Socialists”, and specifically regretting “siding with them at the last election”, the engineer recalls Aesop’s Fable ‘The Horse and the Stag’ in his critique of British socialism:

It was like the story of the horse that asked the man to get on his back and help him against his enemies. When the horse had been helped, the man wouldn’t get off. The Socialists used us to get their own way, and that was not our way. We did not want to upset society; we only wanted to get a little more out of it. Of course we talked high about privileged classes, and the tyranny of masters, but we knew that was all stuff.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Ibid., pp. 7 and 47.

<sup>192</sup> ‘The Socialist Menace’, *Daily Mail* (30<sup>th</sup> May 1908), p.8.

<sup>193</sup> *The Triumph of Socialism*, p. 56.



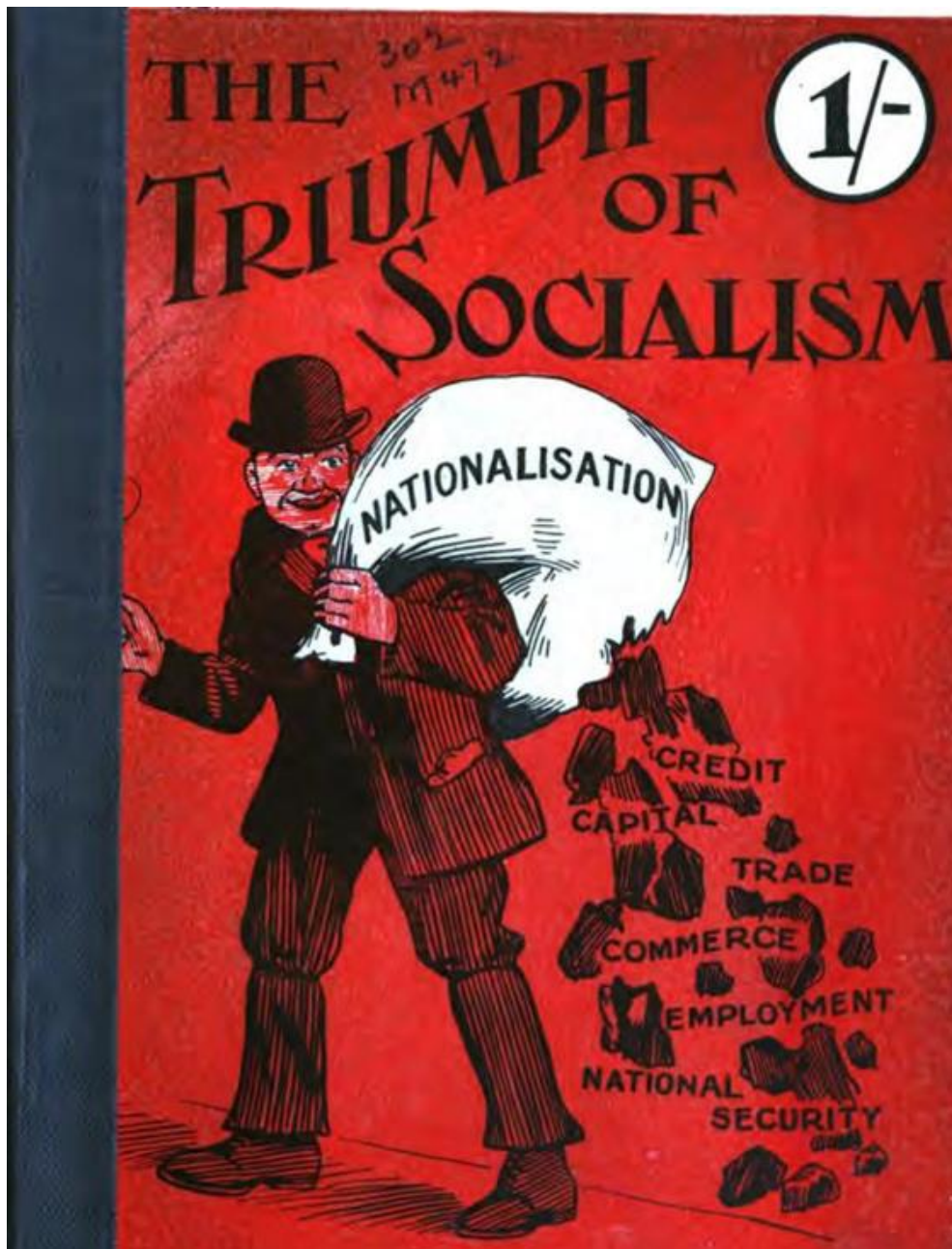


Figure 4.3 – Unknown illustrator, front cover of J. D. Mayne, *The Triumph of Socialism* (London: Swann Sonnenschein and Co., 1908). This illustrated front cover (for which no information is provided in the book itself) is reminiscent of a satirical cartoon. It depicts a ‘Socialist’ MP (probably the party leader known as “the Great Perkins”) as a burglar, sneaking off with the nation’s loot. Bursting out of his “Nationalisation” swag-bag are the pillars of Britain’s economic strength, including “credit”, “commerce”, and “national security”. A thinly-disguised critique of the Liberals and Labour (often conflated by invasion literature authors), the illustration reinforces the message of J. D. Mayne’s narrative, that ‘socialism’ in practice would trigger political collapse.

The engineer is reduced to earning a low weekly wage in a nationalised factory, after losing his savings in the post-election financial crash. Angry and disenchanted, the interview ends with the blunt assertion “No, Sir, I don’t believe in Socialism”.<sup>194</sup> Elsewhere in the narrative railwaymen, agricultural labourers, and a variety of other unionised workers “offer the most uncompromising resistance” to the process of nationalisation.<sup>195</sup> Rather than two sides of the same coin, *The Triumph of Socialism* emphasises the idea of an inherent conflict of interests between socialism and trade unionism. Unionised workers, therefore, were not automatically revolutionaries.

This positive assessment of trade unionism helps highlight an important social distinction popular among invasion literature authors, and more broadly with the Edwardian ‘Radical Right’, between the decent and indecent working classes. Such authors and commentators, as Searle has argued, generally had faith in “the good sense of the British people”. What they feared were those who had, in Leo Maxse’s words, “been cruelly exploited by self-seeking demagogues”.<sup>196</sup> A divide had emerged in the minds of such commentators between patriotic workers and the social residuum; between “the best working men” and “the agitators”; between the orderly masses and the violent mob.<sup>197</sup> Lurid representations of a revolutionary underclass, as such, are a common feature of Edwardian invasion narratives. These ideas were reacting to and perpetuating a number of historical and contemporary concerns. They responded in part to the late-Victorian preoccupation with nihilist-anarchist terrorism, and the related popular opposition to Britain’s tradition of granting foreign revolutionaries political asylum.<sup>198</sup> These fears were additionally shaped by concern over the declining health of the urban mass populace, an idea that generated particular

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>196</sup> Quoted in G. Searle, ‘Critics of Edwardian Society: The Case of the Radical Right’, in O’day, ed, *The Edwardian Age*, p. 85.

<sup>197</sup> Willoughby de Broke to Maxse, 16<sup>th</sup> June 1912, in Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>198</sup> See B. Porter, *Plots and Paranoia: A History of Political Espionage in Britain 1790-1988* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), pp. 113-119, D. Ó. Donghaile, *Blasted Literature, Victorian Political Fiction and the Shock of Modernism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001), A. Butterworth, *The World that Never Was* (London: Bodley Head, 2010), pp. 308-328.

interest during the post-South African War debate over physical degeneration.<sup>199</sup> Perhaps the most important influence on these representations was the emerging theory of crowd psychology. Published in English in 1896, Gustave Le Bon's *The Crowd* promoted the principle of the mob mentality. Within large groups, as Bourke asserts, people were thought to lose their individual sense of rationality, leading to "a return to primitive forms of behaviour". Almost animalistic in quality, the crowd "was easily frightened and always violent: unless controlled by a powerful leader, it would wreak political, social and economic havoc."<sup>200</sup> The rebellious masses of invasion literature reflect many of these broad concerns, and as such, partake in an eclectic mix of anarchist, socialist, and apolitical violent disorder.

An illustrative example of this eclecticism is the anonymous *The Sack of London*. The narrative sees a French naval blockade reduce the country to near starvation, emphasising the folly of free trade and the danger of relying on imported foodstuffs. "London was destined to be sacked" in this conflict, "but by no foreign enemy". Instead, the city is plunged into chaos by "a hunger maddened mob, intent not so much upon robbery as upon getting food, and inflamed by the teachers of anarchy and socialism".<sup>201</sup> Infected by "the love of plunder, murder, and rapine", the rioters loot the Bank of England, clash with a regiment of soldiers, and contribute to the death of two million Londoners. In the aftermath of this rebellion, the narrator describes how bodies are piled up and set alight, as "London became the funeral pile of its outcast citizens."<sup>202</sup> Such naval blockade narratives are often shaped by this specific anxiety, where short food supplies quickly lead to social unrest.<sup>203</sup> In

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<sup>199</sup> See D. Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder 1848-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*, pp. 22-24, and J. Winter, *The Great War and the British People* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1986), pp. 6-24.

<sup>200</sup> J. Bourke, *Fear: A Cultural History* (London: Virago, 2006), p. 65.

<sup>201</sup> *The Sack of London*, pp. 49 and 62.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>203</sup> Matin, 'Securing Britain', pp. 26-7. Various invasion narratives, by contrast, take issue with this line of reasoning. In *The Battle of the North Sea in 1914*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Hugh Rees, 1913) by Rear Admiral Sir S. Eardley-Wilmot, a work which praises the value of "blue-water patriotism", blockade theories are criticised as alarmism. Dismissing calls for increasing the domestic agricultural production, the narrator asserts that

Charles Gleig's *When All Men Starve*, food shortages triggered by a crisis in British commerce eventually lead to brutal class war and the collapse of the state. Describing hunger as "the greatest of all foes to loyalty", the narrative follows the emergence and ultimate success of this revolution. Marching towards Parliament with the intention of seizing control, "the tall-hatted" MPs seem powerless "in the face of that unled, unarmed mass of humanity".<sup>204</sup> Though this revolution is ostensibly socialist in character, its driving force is the self-centred, individualistic nature of the British masses. "To the unemployed wage-earner", Gleig asserts, "his own empty stomach had become the centre of the universe."<sup>205</sup>

With the vast majority of Edwardian invasion narratives set largely around London, representations of revolution regularly employ a geographic trope of mass-movement from east to west. Emerging from the working class districts of the East End, this trope typically sees a rebellious crowd descend upon Westminster, before fanning out into the wealthy respectability of west London. Leading the way as ever, Le Queux's *The Great War in England* captures the outbreak of civil disorder in just this manner, describing how the "starving poor had formed processions, and marched through Mayfair and Belgravia demanding bread...thousands from the East End ran riot in the aristocratic thoroughfares of Kensington".<sup>206</sup> Portrayed as a living, breathing beast in *The Unpardonable War*, "the East End had slipped its leash, and its fangs were dripping – it needed but a direction to run amuck".<sup>207</sup> Other works refer to more specific districts of London, usually those associated with grinding poverty and large immigrant communities. In *When England Slept*, the occupation of London by a fifth column of 250,000 immigrant Germans leads to "the rising of the Whitechapel mob". Anarchic and ill-conceived in nature, the riot is quelled "with a merciless hand" by the occupiers.<sup>208</sup> Walter Wood's *The Enemy in our Midst*, another novel

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"expedients for stimulating the growth of corn could furnish no substitute for an inefficient police of the seas", p. 73.

<sup>204</sup> C. Gleig, *When All Men Starve* (London and New York: J. Lane, 1898), pp. 122 and 78.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>206</sup> *The Great War in England*, p. 131.

<sup>207</sup> *The Unpardonable War*, p. 64.

<sup>208</sup> H. Curties, *When England Slept* (London: Everett and Co., 1909), p. 181.

based on the military danger of German immigration, begins with a mass working class rally. Though formed largely by “the decent unemployed”, the march quickly descends into violence after the arrival of the “unclean hordes” from Soho. As one irate protestor remarks to the protagonist John Steel, “I feel that mad I could step out an’ smash the first fat, smug city man I see on the pavement!”.<sup>209</sup> This sense of geographic separation, then, is arguably representative of broader Edwardian social distinctions. These distinctions, moreover, are not simply between rich and poor (or east and west London), but between respectable British society and its revolutionary urban underclass.

The rebellious crowds of the examples above are clearly revolting over a range of issues, such as lack of food, economic and social disparities, and foreign invasion. They are also given a selection of politicised labels by authors, including anarchist, socialist, and the ill-defined “mob”. One useful way of analysing these inconsistent representations is through assessing the treatment of such themes by one prolific author, in this case William Le Queux. Though regularly claiming to be a non-partisan critic of British society, Le Queux was far from politically neutral. Numerous historians and biographers have attempted to pinpoint Le Queux’s political views, and have variously described him as “a Conservative...[of] a confused kind”, a “Tory pessimist”, and as “a sinister, anti-Semitic, and right-wing figure”.<sup>210</sup> While recognising that much of his vast literary output was apolitical in nature, Roger Stearn suggests that the message of Le Queux’s invasion and espionage fiction “was largely that of the radical right”.<sup>211</sup> Unconvinced Tory or disenchanted radical, the lack of surviving personal papers for Le Queux, or for that matter a reliable autobiography, make it difficult to

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<sup>209</sup> *The Enemy in our Midst*, pp. 34 and 16.

<sup>210</sup> C. Patrick and S. Baister, *William Le Queux, Master of Mystery* (Chippenham: Antony Rowe, 2007), p.234, D. A. T. Stafford, ‘Conspiracy and Xenophobia: The Popular Spy Novels of William Le Queux, 1893-1914’, *Europa*, 4.2 (1981), p. 181, S. Kemp, C. Mitchell and D. Trotter, *Edwardian Fiction: An Oxford Companion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 239-40.

<sup>211</sup> R. T. Stearn, ‘The Mysterious Mr Le Queux: War Novelist, Defence Publicist and Counterspy’, *Soldiers of the Queen*, 70 (1992), p. 19.

confirm such speculations.<sup>212</sup> What is more certain, however, is that Le Queux was an avowed anti-socialist. A dogged defender of the social status quo “deeply concerned with the social and moral order”, and “as concerned with the boundaries of class as he was with those of nation”, Stafford has argued that Le Queux’s writings “embody an archetypal lower middle class hostility to socialism.”<sup>213</sup> By exploring the representation of socialism and revolution in three of Le Queux’s novels, *The Great War in England*, *The Invasion of 1910*, and *The Unknown Tomorrow*, the following section will aim to verify Stafford’s contention, and in doing so, will further emphasise the importance of domestic political themes in British invasion literature.

Le Queux’s anti-socialism is visibly apparent throughout *The Great War in England*. Questioning Britain’s sluggish mobilisation upon the declaration of war, the narrator is quick to link the “vehement outpourings of Anarchists, Socialists, and ‘No War’ partisans” with “the past apathy of the authorities” in military matters.<sup>214</sup> Immediately, then, Le Queux directly associates domestic political extremism with susceptibility to invasion. In a later chapter entitled ‘Bomb Outrages in London’, Le Queux delivers a vivid and sensational description of social unrest. With the invasion crisis harnessed as “an excuse for Anarchism to vent its grievances against law and order”, a “furious, demoniacal rabble” sacks the National Portrait Gallery, destroys part of the War Office, and hurls picric acid bombs at unfortunate policemen. Though masterminded by highly-organised “Anarchist leaders”, the foot soldiers of this rising are “denizens of the slums...[and] criminal crusaders against the law”. Combining gratuitous violence with a degree of revolutionary consciousness, the rioters sing the Marseillaise as the Grand Hotel is razed, before brutally strangling local residents in order to steal their possessions. This frightful scene is framed by Le Queux as “a terrible realisation of Anarchist prophecies”:

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<sup>212</sup> Stearn rightly dismisses Le Queux’s memoirs, *Things I Know about Kings, Celebrities and Crooks* (London: Eveleigh Nash and Grayson, 1923) and the official biography by Norman Sladen, *The Real Le Queux* (London: Nicholson and Watson, 1938), as “unreliable and uninformative on crucial aspects”, *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>213</sup> Stafford, ‘Conspiracy and Xenophobia: The Popular Spy Novels of William Le Queux, 1893-1914’, *Europa*, p. 181.

<sup>214</sup> *The Great War in England*, p. 26.

On the one hand, an enemy had landed on our shores with every chance of a successful march to London, while on the other the revolutionary spirit had broken out unmistakably among the criminal class, and lawlessness and murder were everywhere rife.<sup>215</sup>

By conflating socialist class consciousness with nihilistic violence and criminality, *The Great War in England* demonstrates its author's wilful ignorance of left-wing ideology. Perhaps more significantly, Le Queux's depiction of rebellious Londoners was criticised as a poor representation of popular attitudes towards contemporary anarchist atrocities. Referring to a recent bomb plot targeting the grand opening of Tower Bridge, the *National Observer* asserted that London's "Anarchist mob" seemed to have "altered its view since it 'went for' the Tower Hill Anarchists."<sup>216</sup> Evidently Le Queux's fear of "bestial urban mobs" was not universally shared.<sup>217</sup>

Despite being written nearly twelve years later, and detailing a German rather than a Franco-Russian invasion, the scenes of social unrest in *The Invasion of 1910* are at first barely distinguishable from those of *The Great War in England*. As the capital is slowly put under siege by the advancing German forces, starving masses from the East End become a "wild, turbulent crowd surging through the City and West End". Describing how "the Red Hand of Ruin spread out upon London", Le Queux portrays a city "at a standstill":

Shopkeepers feared to open their doors on account of the fierce, hungry mobs parading the streets. Orators were haranguing the crowds in almost every open space...Terror and blank despair were everywhere.<sup>218</sup>

In a critical review, *The Spectator* complained that Le Queux "simply wades in English blood", and that his only desire "is to make our flesh creep and frighten us into action by

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid., pp. 44-48.

<sup>216</sup> 'The Great War in England in 1897', *National Observer*, 13.304, (1894), p. 465. This refers directly to a meeting of unemployed men at Tower Hill on 29<sup>th</sup> June 1894, where two anarchist speakers, who were encouraging an anti-monarchy counter-demonstration against the grand opening of the bridge by the Prince of Wales, were attacked by the crowd. For more on this and the related bomb plot see 'Anarchists and the Tower Bridge', *Aberdeen Evening Express* (30<sup>th</sup> June 1894), p. 3, and 'The Anarchists of Tower Hill: Conclusion of the Trial', *Manchester Guardian* (1<sup>st</sup> August 1894), p. 8.

<sup>217</sup> Stearn, 'The Mysterious Mr Le Queux', *Soldiers of the Queen*, p. 12.

<sup>218</sup> *The Invasion of 1910*, p. 171.

shaking a second “Boney” at us”.<sup>219</sup> His visions of rebellious mobs, by this thinking, are no more than rhetorical flourishes, adding to the general horror of an imagined foreign invasion. This argument is not entirely implausible, certainly when considering the latter half of *The Invasion of 1910*, where anti-German sentiment trumps revolutionary ideology. As the Bristol-based Government begins to coordinate military resistance, a collective sense of faith is expressed:

...when the hour comes for the revenge, London will rise as a man...Socialists, Non-Conformists, Labour agitators, Anarchists, and demagogues will unite with us in one great national, patriotic effort to exterminate our conquerors.<sup>220</sup>

Yet Le Queux’s regular use of revolutionary themes was undoubtedly an expression of his entrenched anti-socialism. This is highlighted in particular by his 1910 novel *The Unknown Tomorrow*. Illustratively subtitled *how the rich fared at the hands of the poor together with a full account of the social revolution in England*, the narrative is set in the bleak near-future of 1935. Britain has been in decline since “the heavy taxation of the Lloyd George Budget”, narrowly repelling German invasion in 1912, and suffering an outbreak of the plague in 1921. Industrial relations, moreover, have been blighted by heavy-handed repression, including the shooting of “seven hundred innocent persons in the streets of Glasgow”.<sup>221</sup> Despite the best intentions of the middle-class leadership of the “Socialists”, who appeal for “a peaceful and bloodless” revolution, the uprising that eventually comes is violent and chaotic, in which “the worst side of human nature...asserted itself on every hand.” Barricades are erected across Piccadilly and Oxford Street, Wormwood Scrubs is liberated, and policemen begin to be lynched. Elsewhere in the country similar scenes occur; the Bodleian Library is sacked in Oxford, and Manchester Cathedral is destroyed. By the time the Government is successfully overthrown, Britain has fallen into “a state of anarchy,

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<sup>219</sup> ‘The Invasion of England’, *The Spectator* (29<sup>th</sup> September 1906), p. 439.

<sup>220</sup> *The Invasion of 1910*, p. 486.

<sup>221</sup> *The Unknown Tomorrow*, pp. 3-5.



bloodshed, and utter chaos”.<sup>222</sup> The socialist regime that emerges is dominated by George Sillence, a cruel ideologue, who promises “to lead such a campaign against the rich that has never been known since the world began.” Fulfilling his promise, Sillence transforms Wormwood Scrubs into a torture chamber, interrogating and terrorising the former governing class. The counter-revolution that finally topples the Provisional Government points to Sillence as evidence that “The human race is not ripe for true Socialism”.<sup>223</sup>

Believing that Le Queux possessed “an unfailing instinct for a good market”, I. F. Clarke has highlighted *The Unknown Tomorrow* as “an indication of the unpopularity of Socialism with the book-reading public of the time”.<sup>224</sup> While this statement may be accurate, it emphasises Le Queux’s well-documented monetary opportunism and marginalises the importance of his genuine anti-socialism. The fact that Le Queux seems to have read socialist literature in his research for *The Unknown Tomorrow* certainly suggests a desire to confront socialism on its own principles.<sup>225</sup> Furthermore, though the narrative has its fair share of sensationalist criticism and violent imagery, it provides moments of surprisingly cogent analysis. Accepting that socialism was “attractive and alluring”, Le Queux argues that it was “ultimately unworkable”, as it attacked many of the basic tenets of British life, such as Christian morality and economic individualism. He even draws distinction, as Patrick and Baister have pointed out, between secular “agnostic socialism” and ethically sound “ideal socialism”, stressing that the predominant former “only ministers to the avarices, lusts, and indolence of everyone.”<sup>226</sup> More than anything else, socialism “misunderstood human nature”. In the concluding passages of *The Unknown Tomorrow*, Le Queux’s narrator describes humankind as naturally conservative, and adds that “no particular class has a monopoly” of such conservatism: “the working man is as loath to alter

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<sup>222</sup> Ibid., pp. 39 and 53.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., pp. 60 and 303.

<sup>224</sup> I. F. Clarke, ‘The Tale of the Future, 1900-1950’, unpublished MA thesis (University of Liverpool, 1953), p. 44.

<sup>225</sup> As John Atkins points out in *The British Spy Novel, Styles in Treachery* (London: Calder, 1984), p. 49, Le Queux quotes at length in *The Unknown Tomorrow* from the Fabian tract *What Socialism Is* (London: G. Standing, 1886).

<sup>226</sup> *The Unknown Tomorrow*, p. 236, Patrick and Baister, *William Le Queux*, p. 238.

his mode of life...as is the successful stockbroker or the aristocratic dilettante.”<sup>227</sup> From the anarchist outrages of *The Great War in England* to the failed revolution of *The Unknown Tomorrow*, then, Le Queux’s invasion narratives are fundamentally shaped by his staunch opposition to socialist ideas.

In the same way that the female suffrage campaign inspired a short series of pro-suffrage narratives, the Edwardian fear of revolutionary upheaval arguably gave rise to a similar sub-genre of speculative fiction. Many of these revolution narratives, such as *The Unknown Tomorrow*, *The Peril of Pines Place*, and *The Triumph of Socialism*, bare close relation to invasion literature.<sup>228</sup> Such works can also be seen as the forebears of post-war red-scare fiction, examples of which include J. D. Beresford’s dystopian novel *Revolution* (1921), and Hugh Addison’s dark adventure narrative *The Battle of London* (1923).<sup>229</sup> This chapter will finish with a detailed analysis of one such narrative that has already been referred to at length, the anonymously-written *Red England*. Published in 1909 with the subtitle *a Tale of the Socialist Terror*, the novel is written in the *Battle of Dorking* model of reflection. Beginning with a prologue that is dated “Cookham, Berks, June 1971”, the narrative looks back on Britain’s “wild orgy of revolutionary fury” from a politically secure future.<sup>230</sup> This revolution has its origins in a disastrous “Socialist” administration, a poorly disguised critique of the Lib-Lab electoral pact. Though aiming to enact gradual social reform, the government is hijacked by a revolutionary committee of extremists, including the consumptive Welsh intellectual Rhys Evans, and Walter Storm, “who wants to abolish marriage, religion, and everything else he can put his hands on”.<sup>231</sup> From the narrative’s start Britain appears on the brink of crisis, with high unemployment and a mutinous army riven by socialist factions. On the prearranged morning of revolution, red rosettes begin to

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<sup>227</sup> *The Unknown Tomorrow*, p. 303.

<sup>228</sup> All three works, as has been explored in detail during this chapter, have prominent themes of invasion and future war. For a useful analysis of *The Unknown Tomorrow* in this regard see Stearn, ‘The Mysterious Mr Le Queux’, pp. 19-21.

<sup>229</sup> Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War*, pp. 142-144.

<sup>230</sup> *Red England*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

appear in people's buttonholes, the police evaporate, and the revolting masses march towards Westminster. As one newspaper anxiously reports, the writing appeared to be on the wall, "Great Britain is doomed! And her downfall will come not from the blows of an outside enemy, but from the revolt of her own sons!"<sup>232</sup>

The most exciting scene of the novel sees the revolutionary mob bursts into the House of Commons. As the chamber is flooded by socialist demagogues and their ardent supporters, the calm before the storm is described:

The two forces gazed at each other - on the one hand, the men who had inherited the traditions of centuries, who stood for everything that was solid and sound and worthy in English life; on the other hand, the men maddened partly by starvation and partly by wild hopes and wilder fears. A splendid past and a sordid present looked at each other for a moment, and then the past went down.

The silence is broken by the outrage of a member of the shadow cabinet, "one Unionist, flourishing a revolver", who is subsequently shot. "With him", laments the narrator, "died the English Constitution".<sup>233</sup> Yet the success of the revolution, as with *The Unknown Tomorrow*, is short lived. Schisms quickly emerge in the new Government, leading to internecine conflict and further shootings in the Commons. In addition, the radical political programme of the new regime proves highly unpopular, and leads to the emergence of a counter-revolutionary movement. With the threat of German intervention adding a further element of alarm, the resistance finds an influential ally in the Royal Navy, which has, it transpires, managed to remain unscathed by the revolutionary upheaval. Recognising its defeat following a naval ultimatum threatening intervention, the government abruptly collapses. Heralded as "the great awakening", the Britain that rises from the ashes of revolution is "a new nation... devoted to its flag and proud of its destinies."<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., p. 70-71.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., p. 223.

*Red England* provides a useful example of why revolution narratives should be understood as a distinct sub-genre. However, the novel also illustrates the close relationship between the Edwardian fear of invasion and the fear of revolution, and the function that literature performed in communicating these concerns. In a review that christened *Red England* 'A Shocker with a Purpose', the *Manchester Courier* speculated that the work would do more damage to the socialist movement than "ten times the amount of printed matter in a serious form":

The story, with its powerful representation of the ultimate results of Socialism in action, will appeal to the ordinary man and woman; and will deprive the vague and many-sided doctrines of the Collectivists of their attraction.<sup>235</sup>

Substitute a few key terms, "Socialism" for invasion and "Collectivists" for sceptics or pro-Germans, and this review could easily be praising a typical invasion narrative. Such works also enjoy obvious similarities in their content and their literary form. Reflecting on the legacy of Britain's revolution, the narrator of *Red England* offers the following conclusions:

Great Britain at the beginning of the twentieth century was weal, flabby, governed by faddists, fearful of its own destiny. Its young men resented making sacrifices for their country...Men had ceased to play games, and had taken to watching them; men had ceased to care to be soldiers, and were eager for other people to fight for them. It had become fashionable to sneer at manliness, and to blush at the suggestion of the belief in God or in morality.<sup>236</sup>

Chastising party politics; anti-militarism; spectator sport; emasculation; and irreligion, this summary encapsulates many of the domestic political concerns of Edwardian invasion literature. The threat of revolution, moreover, is clearly vehicular in nature, harnessed by the author as a method of communicating a range of social and political grievances.

Edwardian invasion literature, therefore, is characterised by fearful representations of the working-class. Such themes respond in part to a marked decline in industrial relations.

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<sup>235</sup> 'A Shocker with a Purpose', *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* (29<sup>th</sup> June 1909), p. 6.

<sup>236</sup> *Red England*, p. 223.

As Matin has argued, “the overlap of the rise of organised labour in Britain with the heyday of the invasion narrative was no coincidence”.<sup>237</sup> Visions of untrammelled trade unionism and of class-conscious, unpatriotic workers combine the dangers of industrial unrest with the threat of invasion, arguing that narrow class interest hindered defensive preparation and encouraged foreign intrigue. Yet crucially, authors regularly distinguish between a decent working population and a revolutionary underclass. Grouping together fears of anarchism, socialism, and of the irrational mob, such representations highlight the important influence of ‘Radical Right’ ideas on authorial understandings of class conflict. Images of starving crowds, of the degenerate population of the East End, of anarchist terrorists, and socialist revolutionaries are arguably all forms of the same anxiety; that foreign invasion could trigger the collapse of Britain’s already delicate class structure. Finally, the idea of approaching revolution narratives as a sub-genre of Edwardian speculative fiction aims to emphasise the intertwined nature of invasion and revolution in the minds of many Edwardian authors. Though threatening from without and within respectively, both would fatally undermine the nation’s social and political status quo.

#### **4.6 – Conclusion: An Edwardian Crisis?**

What this chapter has tried to highlight is the influence of four major domestic political controversies on Edwardian invasion literature. The Liberal electoral victory in 1906, the female suffrage campaign, the re-emergence of the Irish question, and increasing levels of industrial unrest are issues that are regularly and liberally referenced by such narratives. The way in which these controversies are represented, it has been argued, offers important insight on the political persuasion of the invasion literature authorship. Such narratives are generally anti-Liberal, equating Liberalism with inexperience, foreign policy incompetence, and by virtue of its association with Labour, political extremism. The literature also largely

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<sup>237</sup> Matin, ‘Securing Britain’, p. 50.

opposes the women's suffrage movement. Many authors present franchise reform as the thin end of a dangerous wedge, fearing that moves towards gender equality threatened social values and masculine identity. In the case of Ireland, these narratives provide a useful window on the declining political relationship between Ireland, Ulster, and Britain. Written in the main by staunch defenders of the Union, contemporary invasion literature (particularly in the late-Edwardian period) reflects an increasingly belligerent political debate over the status of Ulster in an Ireland under Home Rule. Finally, concerns over the political threat of the working class, divided between class-conscious trade unionists and the extremist revolutionary underclass, demonstrates how many authors feared the prospect of serious class conflict.

These representations further confirm the thematic importance of domestic political issues in Edwardian invasion narratives. Such literature creates scenarios in which external threats coalesce with internal fears, forming what Stafford describes as "a peril to the very fabric of society".<sup>238</sup> This chapter has attempted to foreground the influence of 'Radical Right' ideology on these ideas of social and political peril. Fierce political partisanship, staunch opposition to franchise reform and to Irish Home Rule, and an alarmist fear of revolutionary upheaval; these qualities arguably question the principle that invasion literature was a Tory product. The clear prevalence of domestic anxieties in such narratives, furthermore, suggests that the Edwardian Crisis paradigm still carries a degree of subjective value. Though revolution (either social, political, or sexual) was an unlikely prospect in pre-1914 Britain, the literary output of authors as diverse as James Blyth, William Le Queux, and Wilfred Newton seems to suggest otherwise. While Edwardian Britain may not have been in the grips of a socio-political crisis, many writers of speculative fiction promoted the idea that it was, and may well have believed it to be themselves.

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<sup>238</sup> D. Stafford, *The Silent Game, The Real World of Imaginary Spies* (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1991), p. 46.

## **Conclusion**

During his analysis of William Le Queux's *The Invasion of 1910* in the entertaining study *Don't Mention the War*, John Ramsden refers to a remarkable event said to have occurred in late-1914. The incident is described as "a spectacular demonstration of fiction as alternative reality":

...[when] rumours circulated that the Germans had landed, the Officer Training Corps of the Inns of Court turned out, commandeered private vehicles and blocked the Great North Road to stop the Germans taking the capital 'again'. That was quite an achievement for a hack-writer whose surname no Briton had ever confidently pronounced.<sup>1</sup>

Quite an achievement, indeed. Yet the reliability of this impromptu mobilisation is somewhat suspect. The origin of Ramsden's anecdote appears to have been *A Sort of Life*, the autobiography of the novelist Graham Greene.<sup>2</sup> Referring to the outbreak of war in 1914, Greene records his boyish enthusiasm at the prospect of being involved. "Perhaps there would be an invasion", he mused, "as in William Le Queux's famous documentary novel". Green goes on to recount that "there were dramatic incidents", even in his native Berkhamsted:

A German master was denounced to my father as a spy because he had been seen under the railway bridge without a hat, a dachshund was stoned in the High Street, and once my uncle Eppy was summoned at night to the police station and asked to lend his motor-car to help block the Great North Road down which a German armoured car was said to be advancing towards London. A colonel of the Inns of Court O. T. C. was also at the station.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Ramsden, *Don't Mention the War: the British and the Germans since 1890* (London: Little, Brown, 2006), p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> Ramsden's sources for *Don't Mention the War* are notoriously difficult to trace, thanks to his habit of 'stacking' footnotes alphabetically. The notes for the work, furthermore, were published on the author's website rather than in the book itself. After his untimely death in 2009, the site was taken down. Thankfully, these notes have been salvaged by the archiving website archive.org. See <http://web.archive.org/web/20060919004258/http://www.johnramsden-dmtw.co.uk/2.htm>

‘Five hundred rifles,’ he lamented, ‘and not a round of live ammunition.’ My uncle was sceptical, but he lent his car.<sup>3</sup>

The outcome of this affair is left tentatively unresolved by both Ramsden and Greene. Neither accounts provide any firm time or date for the incident. Nor is there any record of the incident in the national or local press. If such an event did occur, then, it was hardly the “spectacular demonstration” of Le Queux’s popular influence that Ramsden would have us believe.

This anecdote has been included here because it demonstrates several important factors that have shaped the arguments of this thesis. Firstly, it serves as an example of the dangers of using fiction as a historical source. Though this event may have occurred in one form or another, the influence of *The Invasion of 1910* on this incident is far from clear. By drawing an explicit link between Le Queux’s novel and the incident recounted by Greene, Ramsden has presented assumption as quantifiable evidence, effectively creating a fiction of his own. In actuality, invasion narratives very rarely serve as unproblematic source material, as this thesis has tried to emphasise. The anecdote also highlights the inherent difficulties surrounding the question of popular reception. While one can assume that Greene read *The Invasion of 1910*, and thus interpreted the rumour of German landings through the context of Le Queux’s imagined invasion, there is little evidence that anyone else was influenced in a similar manner. To assert that the narrative created an “alternative reality”, therefore, is surely a wild exaggeration. What the story can be said to illustrate (albeit imperfectly) is the value of treating the Edwardian invasion-scare as a collection of component anxieties. Aside from the threat of invasion, the anecdote contains reference to concerns over foreign espionage, technological advance, and British military amateurism. The fear of invasion in this incident, as with many examples of Edwardian invasion literature, is inseparable from domestic political anxieties.

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<sup>3</sup> G. Greene, *A Sort of Life* (London: Bodley Head, 1971), pp. 64-65.



This thesis has proposed an analytical shift in the study of British invasion literature, from the ‘external’ threat of invasion to ‘internal’ fears of social and political upheaval. It has argued that pre-1914 invasion literature is heavily shaped by internal political themes, and has aimed to contextualise these narratives in the domestic political history of Edwardian Britain. Through exploring the representation of domestic political unrest in invasion narratives, the analysis has foregrounded the concept of authorial motivation. By tracking consistent literary themes, establishing biographical portraits of authors, and assessing the critical reception of these works, it has been argued that domestic political anxieties heavily influenced the writing and production of Edwardian invasion literature. Though these conclusions are inevitably informed speculations rather than certainties, the thesis has defended authorial motivation as a valuable framework for historical analysis. Moreover, as the example above illustrates, the concept of authorial motivation is no less problematic than the question of popular reception. A second important aspect of this project’s approach has been the analytical concept of anxiety. Distinguishing between the objective ‘fear’ of invasion and the subjective nature of ‘anxiety’, the thesis has further suggested that ‘anxiety’ operates in a cyclical manner in Edwardian invasion narratives. While this literature is influenced by a wide range of specific domestic political anxieties, it is equally shaped by a much larger, nebulous sense of anxiety about social and political change. These narratives, as such, are as much comments on specific domestic political anxieties as they are symptoms of what Geoffrey Harpham has called “the Edwardian sense of cultural degeneration”.<sup>4</sup>

This analytical shift has been achieved through pursuing three major arguments over the course of several thematic chapters. The first of these arguments concerns the vehicular nature of Edwardian invasion literature. By exploring the representation of ‘internal’ themes in this literature, the thesis has emphasised the multi-faceted character of the invasion narrative, and argued that authors rarely utilised the format to *solely* preach the dangers of

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<sup>4</sup> G. Harpham, ‘Time Running Out: The Edwardian Sense of Cultural Degeneration’, *Clio*, 5.3 (1976), p. 283.

foreign attack. In the second chapter it was argued that invasion literature provided a forum for an implicit debate over the nature of national identity. Introspective in character, such narratives define Britishness against a series of damaging forces, such as political extremism, foreign economic infiltration, and the declining importance of religion. Highlighting the important influence of the Edwardian compulsory military service campaign on invasion literature, the third chapter argued that these narratives are a form of pro-conscription propaganda. Though responding in part to the external threat of German militarism, compulsory military service is presented as offering a solution to all-manner of domestic social and political problems, from increasing physical fitness to improving public morals. In directly engaging with George Dangerfield's tripartite of rebellions, the final chapter emphasised the way in which the period's major internal political flashpoints shaped the writing of invasion narratives. It argued that the literature's regular representation of domestic political upheaval - including the female suffrage movement, the campaign for Irish Home Rule, and the spectre of social revolution – suggests that such narratives were written to express a range of contemporary concerns, not simply the fear of invasion.

The second major goal of this thesis was to question the idea that British invasion literature was, as Samuel Hynes has suggested, a Tory phenomenon. Instead, it has been argued that these narratives are better understood as a product of the Edwardian 'Radical Right', as defined by Geoffrey Searle. Rather than espousing a traditional model of cautious Conservatism, the invasion literature of the period is often characterised by radical proposals and right-wing ideologies. This was highlighted in the second chapter through analysing the genre's representation of national identity anxieties. Concerns over foreign immigration (particularly the cultural and political impact of Jewish immigration), urbanisation, and technological modernity are anxieties closely associated with the ideas of the 'Radical Right'. A further illustration of this ideological dynamic, as discussed in the third chapter, is the literature's close relationship with the Edwardian campaign for compulsory military service. As a *cause celebre* of the 'Radical Right', the visions of military reform in invasion literature

are framed in highly emotive and symbolic language, and presented as combating a range of domestic political issues. These include the threat of physical degeneration, the common perception of inexorable imperial decline, and opposition to the national 'obsession' with sport and leisure. In the fourth chapter, furthermore, the literature's representation of the major internal controversies of Edwardian Britain was presented as consistent with 'Radical Right' ideology. By analysing the representation of several consistent themes, including marked contempt for Liberalism, staunch opposition to female suffrage, and irrational anxieties over the prospect of social revolution, the chapter located invasion narratives as on the extreme Right of Edwardian Conservatism, rather than at its centre.

This project has also involved reconsidering the idea of the 'Edwardian Crisis'. As the opening chapter explored, the idea that Edwardian Britain was in a state of domestic political turmoil - an argument popularised by Dangerfield in *The Strange Death of Liberal England* - is now widely dismissed as simplistic and misleading. Yet this thesis has aimed to emphasise the subjective value of the 'Edwardian Crisis' concept. It has argued that many authors of invasion narratives interpreted the Edwardian period through the language of crisis, and arguably believed that Britain was approaching a critical political juncture. In debating the nature of Edwardian Britishness, many authors employed highly pessimistic language, as if fearing that a range of cultural and political forces were critically undermining British national identity. Similarly, in calling for compulsory military service, many invasion narratives presented a British populace in terminal decline. Degenerate, decadent, and unpatriotic, only military reform could defend the nation against both foreign aggression and domestic political disaster. Finally, by engaging directly with the 'Edwardian Crisis', the fourth chapter highlighted the influence of domestic political flashpoints on the writing and production of invasion literature. Though this thesis has accepted that Edwardian Britain may not have been experiencing a social and political crisis, these works promoted and perpetuated the idea that it was. They are best approached, therefore, as narratives of

crisis, shaped by an authorial belief that Britain was experiencing major social and political unrest.

This thesis has thus offered an original contribution to the study of British invasion literature, and to understandings of pre-war domestic political upheaval. It has emphasised the importance of contextualising 'external' fears of invasion in the 'internal' anxieties of the Edwardian period. Traditionally treated as evidence of the pervasive fear of invasion in pre-1914 Britain, this project has highlighted the vehicular function of popular invasion scares, arguing that domestic political concerns are an equally apparent feature of invasion narratives. Though clearly responding to a worsening global diplomatic climate, and reacting against perceived challenges to Britain's naval and military security, the production of Edwardian invasion literature was heavily influenced by the threat of domestic political upheaval.

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